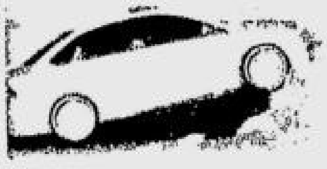

- **Motoring / B8** The day the Eagles crashed and the (Ford) Focus flew
- **Business / B1** Economy likely to grow by 5% this year, says BSP gov
- **2bU! / D1** World famous writer of 'The Sandman' goes one-on-one with PDI
- **News / A2** Witness to testify 'jueteng' money funds poll fraud
- **Metro / A23** 2 dead in Muntinlupa hostage drama

Doble sold Garci tapes to Ong for P2M, says lover

By Dona Pazzibugan and Philip Tubeza

A MISTRESS of military intelligence agent Vidal Doble yesterday said it was her lover who sold the "Hello Garci" tapes to ex-National Bureau of Investigation deputy chief Samuel Ong, disputing the military's claim that it was not the source of the tape.

DOBLE/ A8

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Only in RP: Ex-presidents refuse to fade away

IN MANY democratic countries, retired leaders quietly fade away. In the Philippines, however, old presidents don't fade away—they jockey for more air time.

ONLY/ A22

THREE IN ONE? BARGAIN!

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph
Wednesday, July 13, 2005 ★★ 58 pages / 5 sections / Vol. 20 / No. 215 P18
website: www.inq7.net

72 percent in Metro do not trust Gloria

Pulse Asia: 58 percent want GMA to resign

MOST people in Metro Manila so distrust President Macapagal-Arroyo that they want her to step down, according to results of a survey conducted by an independent polling group early this month.

The President's husband Jose Miguel Arroyo and son Pampanga Rep. Juan Miguel Arroyo have even lower trust ratings than the President, Pulse Asia Inc. said yesterday.

Father and son are accused of receiving huge payoffs from operators of "jueteng," an illegal numbers game.

Pulse Asia said almost three in four residents of the metropolis (72 percent) distrusted Ms Arroyo, who is fighting for political survival amid accusations that she rigged the presidential election last year, up from 60 percent in June.

Only 12 percent expressed trust in the President while 16 percent were undecided on the matter.

In a statement, Pulse Asia executive director Ana Maria L. Tabunda said it was Ms Arroyo's lowest trust rating in Metro Manila since she assumed the presidency in January 2001.

Tabunda said no one commissioned Pulse Asia to conduct the survey.

She noted that a "remarkably big majority" (68 percent) of the 300 representative adults polled from July 2 to 8 also disapproved of the President's performance.

Ms Arroyo's current disapproval rating is 9 percentage points higher than last month's figure (59 percent) and 24 percentage points higher than her rating in March (44 percent).

"(T)rust and indecision ratings are nearly the same across socioeconomic classes but a slightly higher distrust rating is posted in Classes D and E as compared to Class ABC (74 percent to 75 percent versus 67 percent)," Tabunda said.

Commenting on the results of the survey, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said: "We have been in the same situation in the past and just like before, we believe we could withstand these questions of confidence."

72 PERCENT/ A7

THIS IS NOT A PALACE WALKOUT but a photo op for solidarity for President Arroyo with Vice President Noli de Castro (front, left), all her Cabinet members and economic managers as they move in tandem toward the Palace for the Neda board meeting on Tuesday.

MALACAÑANG PHOTO

Teves, new finance secretary, hailed

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Michelle V. Remo

A MILD-MANNERED former lawmaker was named by President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday to head her economic team, which was decimated by the resignation of seven Cabinet members and three agency heads last week.

"Today, I announced the appointment of Landbank president Margarito Teves as the new secretary of finance," Ms Arroyo said in a speech at the Rizal Hall in Malacañang. *(Teves profile on Page A7.)*

The President described her new appointment as part of the "restructuring and strengthening the Cabinet" after she demanded the courtesy resignation of her Cabinet officials on Thursday as part of wide-ranging reforms meant to appease a restless public.

"I am asking our sectors to give me names of candidates that we can invite and replace those who will not return to the Cabinet or even to help out at other levels of government," Ms Arroyo said.

Even as she made the appeal, some deputies of the Cabinet secretaries who resigned on Friday followed suit.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita broke the news of Teves' appointment on dzRB in which he

TEVES/ A21

AFP intelligence monitoring junior officers

By Fe Zamora

CONTRADICTING the Armed Forces of the Philippines' official position of neutrality in the current political crisis, some military groups are ready with statements demanding that their commander in chief step down, according to a star-ranked officer.

Cracks are surfacing in what is reportedly a solid military front, with at least five classes from the Philippine Military Academy with members holding ranks from major down being closely watched by the Intelligence Service of the AFP (Isafp).

One group conducted "heated debates" as the members argued about what position to take after President Macapagal-Arroyo apologized for her "lapse in judgment" in calling a Comelec official at the height of the election canvass in the May 2004 elections. She has denied that she cheated in the elections.

The source said that only the intercession of "cooler heads" stopped the group, which has brigadier generals among its members—from issuing statements calling for the resignation of Ms Arroyo.

"We have to consider the welfare of our men. If the AFP has to move, it has to move as one," the source explained.

AFP INTELLIGENCE/ A20

WAKE-UP CALL from Bro. Eddie Villanueva, leader of Bangon Pilipinas, during the rally in Makati City calling for President Arroyo's resignation. He's expected to lead 5,000 of his followers to the scheduled rally today in Makati organized by the United Opposition and 40 other anti-Arroyo groups. The evangelist who lost his presidential bid last May vowed he would carry his protest around the country.

RAFFY LERMA

Soliman willing to testify on scams

By Cynthia D. Balana

RESIGNED Social Welfare and Development Secretary Corazon "Dinky" Soliman yesterday said she was willing to testify on anomalies in the administration of President Macapagal-Arroyo should an impeachment trial against her push through.

In a talk with the INQUIRER, Soliman said Cabinet officials like her had been privy to certain sensitive information that could not be disclosed in public because they were bound by the confidentiality rule.

But Soliman said she was willing to break the confidentiality rule not only in an impeachment trial but also in a truth commission inquiry or any other "proper venue" for the sake of the national interest.

"I'm willing, at a proper time, to say these things. But it should be made under oath," she said in a cell phone interview.

Opposition lawmakers at the House of Representatives are taking a serious look at the impeachment option after Ms Arroyo on Friday rejected calls by Soliman, six other resigned Cabinet officials and three heads of major line agen-

SOLIMAN/ A22

Opposition hopes to mount biggest show of force today

By Norman Bordadora, Nancy C. Carvajal, Luige A. del Puerto and Tarra V. Quismundo

UNABLE to win over Church leaders to their side, opposition forces take to the streets of Makati today in what they said was a dress rehearsal for bigger protests to force President Macapagal-Arroyo to step down.

Rally leaders said the protest would unite a broad spectrum of opposition groups in what could be the biggest show of force since the political crisis erupted last month over allegations that Ms Arroyo rigged the May 2004 election and her family received "jueteng" payoffs.

Organizers said some 40 groups, representing the Right, the Left and the "middle forces," would join the protest.

They include the United Opposition (UNO)—chaired by Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay—leftist groups, like Bayan and Kilusang Mayo Uno, and supporters of deposed President Joseph Estrada and late actor Fernando Poe Jr.

Police placed units nationwide on the highest state of alert and activated a defense ring—called "Manila Shield"—to protect Malacañang and curb violence, according to documents obtained by the INQUIRER.

Manila Shield would also involve the setting up of blocking forces around the metropolis, formation of small combat units armed with guns, calling in of reinforcements from the provinces, and use of motorcycle riders to monitor the protests, the documents show.

Organizers of the protest said they expected some 40,000 people to converge on the intersection of Ayala Avenue and Paseo de Roxas for their rally planned to begin at 3 p.m.

"Effective today (Tuesday) at noon, we are declaring full alert for the PNP. I think the military will also sooner or later declare a red alert," Philippine National Po-

OPPOSITION/ A22

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Bicol Region, Visayas and Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers and thunderstorms mostly in the afternoon or evening.

COMPILED BY: CYRIL L BONABENTE, PDI RESEARCH/07/13/05 SOURCE: PAGASA

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	**Iloilo/Bacolod**	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	**Roxas**	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	**Cebu**	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	**Tacloban**	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	**Gen. Santos**	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	**Zamboanga**	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	**Cagayan de Oro**	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	**Davao**	Cloudy with Rains

Bishop has 2 more witnesses

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

EVEN as the investigation into the illegal numbers game appears to be tapering off, anti-jueteng crusader Archbishop Oscar Cruz yesterday said two big witnesses were being lined up to testify how jueteng bribe money was allegedly used to manipulate the results of the 2004 presidential elections.

"They are credible because they already know how jueteng and elections are practically married. This is a marriage of convenience, jueteng and elections," Cruz told reporters as the sixth hearing into the jueteng controversy began yesterday.

"This is possibly bigger than the 'Hello Garci' tapes because of the people involved in it," said the Lingayen-Dagupan bishop.

Overshadowed

Administration Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago said the Senate would give Cruz's big witness a chance to testify next week after which the chamber should end the criminal aspect of the probe as Congress would probably find itself occupied with preparations for impeachment proceedings against President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"The impeachment preparations of the two houses will overshadow these two hearings whether we like it or not," the senator said.

Cruz said the new witnesses were "direct, firsthand witnesses." One of them was present at a meeting where jueteng bribe money was handed out to manipulate the election results, he said.

He described the witnesses as "important people [who] held high positions in government, not necessarily during the Arroyo administration."

A source in the jueteng industry said one of the witnesses could be a "jueteng lord" from Bicol who was "very close to GMA," the President.

'Bombshell' witness

Former senator Vicente Sotto, the spokesperson of the late Fernando Poe Jr., Ms Arroyo's closest rival in 2004, told reporters he also had a "bombshell" witness. He said he already referred the witness to Cruz.

Santiago said the Senate committees would give Cruz's witness an opportunity to testify next week after which the criminal aspect of the probe would end.

"We will then proceed to the next phase or stage of the hearing which would be to determine whether we should legalize jueteng or not. After all, this is an inquiry in aid of legislation," Santiago said.

She said the criminal aspect of the investigation was intended to see whether there was any ground for filing an impeachment complaint against Ms Arroyo.

"So far what we've received is hearsay testimony except for one alleged eyewitness whose credibility we have been testing this afternoon. So I think that the best thing for Congress to do is to prepare for the impeachment proceedings which will certainly take center stage on July 25 right after the State of the Nation Address of the President," Santiago said.

4 witnesses

Cruz has so far presented four witnesses who implicated the President's husband, Jose Miguel Arroyo, son Pampanga Rep. Juan Miguel "Mikey" Arroyo and brother-in-law Negros Occidental Rep. Ignacio "Iggy" Arroyo in the jueteng payola scandal.

Senators yesterday tried to impeach the credibility of bagwoman Sandra Cam who alleged that she personally delivered jueteng bribe money to Mikey and Iggy Arroyo at the House last year *(see related story)*.

Former Bicol police director, retired Chief Supt. Restituto Mosqueda, who was also implicated by the four witnesses, became the target of senators' questions because of his many properties.

TETE A TETE. Archbishop Oscar Cruz confers with former Sen. Tito Sotto during yesterday's Senate hearing on "jueteng" obviously about a bombshell of a witness who is expected to connect "jueteng" money to the campaign of President Macapagal-Arroyo. Confessed bag woman Sandra Cam seems disinterested in the foreground.

JESS YUSON

Tempers flare in 'jueteng' hearing

THE OTHERWISE boring Senate inquiry into "jueteng" yesterday ended with a bang after tempers flared between administration Sen. Richard Gordon and lawyer Frank Chavez over Gordon's intense questioning of Chavez's client, confessed bag woman Sandra Cam.

Gordon's probing questions on Cam's "dark past" and alleged involvement in illegal recruitment and estafa cases, among others, so riled Chavez that he stood up and engaged Gordon in a heated debate.

"Your honor, we are not a monarchy here," thundered the red-faced Chavez.

To this, a cool Gordon retorted: "I'm glad to see that we're seeing the true character of our friends here. *Res ipsa loquitor* [the thing speaks for itself]."

It was at this point that Sen. Manuel Villar Jr. suspended the hearings.

But Chavez pressed on and charged that Gordon's questions had given the impression that his client was the "accused in this case."

Gordon demanded that Chavez be declared in contempt.

"I would rather be declared in contempt of the Senate than be declared in contempt of justice. Mr. Senator Gordon," said Chavez.

Villar reminded everyone that the hearing had been suspended.

Chavez later told reporters Gordon had "argued, badgered and bamboozled" his client. *TJ Burgonio*

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PART OF REFORM PACKAGE

GMA calls for shift to parliament system

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.,
Philip C. Tubeza and TJ Burgonio

EMBATTLED President Macapagal-Arroyo on Tuesday appealed to political and civil groups to join her in bringing about political reforms, including a shift in the form of government from presidential to parliamentary.

"I will begin to reach out to political and civil sectors that have an interest in various advocacies relevant to our Constitution," said the President. "I would like to appeal to them to listen to the voice of the fundamental law of the land. We must all have the discernment to what is good and right for the Filipino people."

In a live broadcast, Ms Arroyo said she would focus her energies on fundamental reforms and give her new Cabinet a "free hand" in governance.

The "fundamental law of the land" needed to be changed to confront issues such as federalism, a parliamentary form of government, campaign finance reform and "modernizing the economic provisions of the Constitution," she said but did not elaborate.

"Over the years, our political system has degenerated to such an extent that it is very difficult to move within the system with hands totally untainted," she said. "We are collectively to blame for the degeneration of the system. We must collectively be the solution," she declared.

Malacañang indicated on Monday that Ms Arroyo was seriously considering the proposal of former President Fidel Ramos for her to stay on as caretaker president to oversee a shift to a parliamentary system, followed by a referendum on a new charter and elections in 2006.

But opposition senators yesterday vowed to block moves to amend the Constitution and set in place a parliamentary system of government.

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said the proposed amendments would meet strong opposition in the Senate and would never prosper. "It seeks to save the President" from resignation calls in the guise of reforming the political system, he said.

Under the 1987 Constitution, any amendment to the Charter should be approved by two-thirds of the members of the Senate and House of Representatives, voting separately, he pointed out.

On Tuesday, 17 ruling and moderate opposition parties agreed to work immediately for constitutional revisions and possibly new elections following a political summit at the Manila Hotel.

"We urge the immediate revision of the Constitution as the proper and correct starting point to re-establish the harmony and stability of the nation, and to address our social backwardness and slow economic progress," the political parties said in a statement.

The parties also called for the "complete overhaul" of the Commission on Elections.

Study the ideas

Ms Arroyo told Speaker Jose de Venecia, who convened the summit, that she would "study the ideas contained in the manifesto in the manner of a president listening to the pulse of the people." She thanked the parties for the proposed reforms.

"I know this will be met with criticism for those who want me to resign from office and short-cut the constitutional process, but I'd like to appeal to them to listen to the voice of the law, the fundamental law of the land," said Ms Arroyo.

De Venecia said the parties agreed to push for a resolution to convene Congress into a constitution-drafting body as soon as it reconvenes on July 25. They also agreed to form a nine-member committee to consult with various sectors and develop a new constitutional framework.

Signatories to the agreement included opposition Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile and Sen. Edgardo Angara.

De Venecia told reporters the new constitution's provisions would dictate whether Ms Arroyo's term would be cut short and elections held next year, as proposed by Ramos.

De Venecia said the House would simultaneously tackle Charter change and the impeachment complaint filed against the President.

"We will move simultaneously, not sequentially," he said. *With reports from Reuters, AP, AFP*

Palace, Erap may yet play Senate kingmaker

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

ADMINISTRATION senators can form a new Senate majority and elect a new Senate President with the help of Malacañang, according to Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago.

A realignment of forces in the Senate has become a possibility after Senate President Franklin Drilon suddenly withdrew his support for President Macapagal-Arroyo, demanding that she step down last Friday amid a growing clamor for the President to resign over allegations of electoral fraud.

He was joined by Senators Francis Pangilinan, Sen. Rodolfo Biazon and 17 other Liberal Party members.

An unnamed administration senator said Drilon was now in danger of losing the Senate presidency, having lost the support of some of the 10 administration senators who remain loyal to Ms Arroyo.

Santiago said there could be a three-cornered fight for the Senate presidency between administration Sen. Manuel Villar; the senator "closest" to jailed ex-president Estrada whose family and allies in the chamber can provide the swing vote; and Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr., if he can get 12 senators behind him.

Santiago, who did not identify the senator "closest" to Estrada, said that person may well become the next Senate President.

"Because even if we get all eight in the majority, we still need four. Where shall we get it? We have to get it from the minority. And the minority has President Estrada as its titular head," she said.

Estrada's wife, Luisa "Loi" Ejercito, and their son Jinggoy are members of the Senate.

Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, who has renounced his membership in the minority, heads Estrada's political party.

Santiago said that since the Drilon bloc has six senators, that leaves eight in the majority. This group needs to get four from among the nine senators in the minority.

Santiago said that aside from fellow LP senators—Pangilinan, Biazon and Mar Roxas—Drilon has the loyalty of two administration senators, Juan Flavier and Ramon Magsaysay Jr., who owe their positions to him.

Santiago expressed confidence a new majority could be formed with the help not just of Estrada but of Malacañang.

"Malacañang will always deny under any administration that it is interfering in internal Senate business...because the Senate is so pivotal in the legislative process and in fact in the entire program of government, just to call a spade a spade, Malacañang will entertain a very strong interest on the outcome of the present Senate maneuvers," she said.

Santiago earlier said the Senate presidency would be the next battle because whoever leads the Senate will play a pivotal role in the impeachment complaint against Ms Arroyo.

But Santiago said there could be a motion to declare all Senate positions vacant at the opening of session on July 25, the day the President delivers her state of the nation address to Congress, which would pave the way for the reorganization.

Santiago said Drilon was furiously back-pedaling and was not expected to resign. After offering Ms Arroyo the love of Iloilo, she noted that he called for her resignation. She said Drilon might now say that what he meant was that he would give her due process in an impeachment.

"I don't know if all these play of words will seduce Mrs. Arroyo with the charms of Mr. Drilon," Santiago said.

Drilon has expressed confidence that he can stay on but said he would be willing to relinquish the Senate presidency if the majority was to decide to elect a new Senate President.

Villar said he would respect the term-sharing arrangement he forged with Drilon at the start of the 13th Congress. The two agreed to split the three-year term of the first regular session, with Drilon serving two years up to July 2007 and Villar the final year.

The unnamed administration senator said Drilon was now a virtual "captive" of majority and minority groups in the Senate.

"He's a Senate President on fire. Everywhere he goes, he's surrounded by fire," the senator said.

"If he seeks the support of the 10-man majority, then he is a captive of the majority. If he casts his lot with the minority, then he's a captive of the minority bloc. He will reign, but the minority will rule," he said.

With a report from TJ Burgonio

Noli, Loren swap raps at tribunal

By Armand N. Nocum

LAWYERS of Vice President Noli de Castro and former Sen. Loren Legarda yesterday traded charges of delaying proceedings in the electoral protests being heard at the Supreme Court which is sitting as the Presidential Electoral Tribunal (PET).

With the presidency possibly just a heartbeat away for Legarda and De Castro, the former senator appeared coy about her intentions to occupy the highest post in the land.

"It's not about the position. It's not a matter of power. It's a matter of truth. I hope the Filipino people will understand this," Legarda said yesterday, after the preliminary conference on the electoral protest she filed against De Castro.

Legarda also blasted De Castro's camp for allegedly delaying the process for a recount and retabulation of votes.

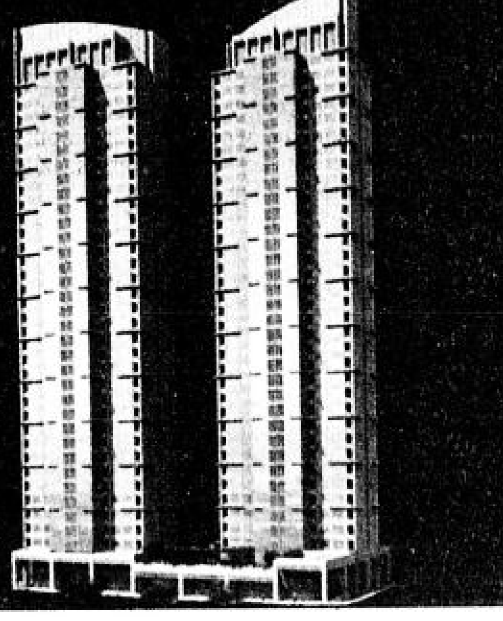
De Castro's lawyers, led by Romulo Macalintal, had objected to Legarda's proposal to get the election returns and ballot boxes from Congress today so the counting could start on Friday.

"It is very obvious that Noli is not interested in truth and justice. *Ang aking katanungan: Ano bang kanyang kinakatakutan* (My question is: What is he afraid of)?" Legarda observed.

Her lawyer Sixto Brillantes agreed, saying: "They are saying that they want this expedited, but in effect they are delaying it because that's their only chance to remain there as VP."

During the preliminary conference, Macalintal said the transfer of ballot boxes would take time. They needed to formally request Congress and its caretakers to release the ballot boxes and to make sure the proper security procedure was in place.

"We never engaged in any delay tactics," Makalintal told reporters after the proceedings, adding that Legarda's lawyers were misleading people in saying that they could transfer the ballot boxes from Congress to the Supreme Court in that short a time.



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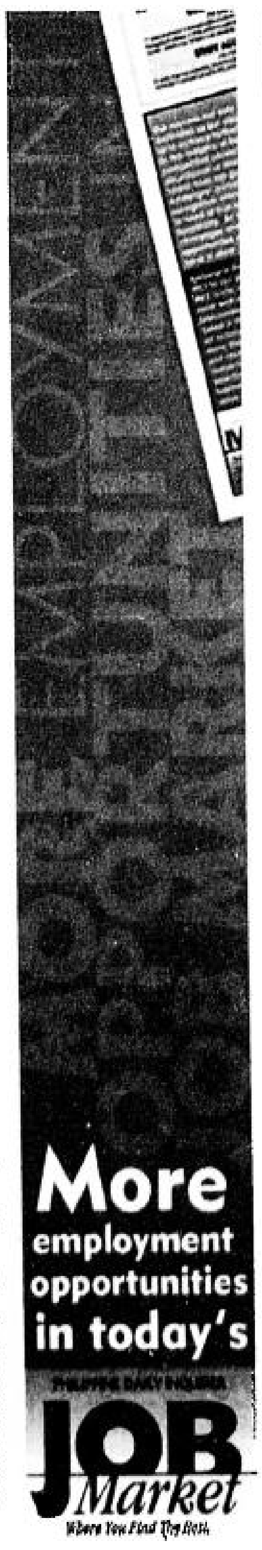

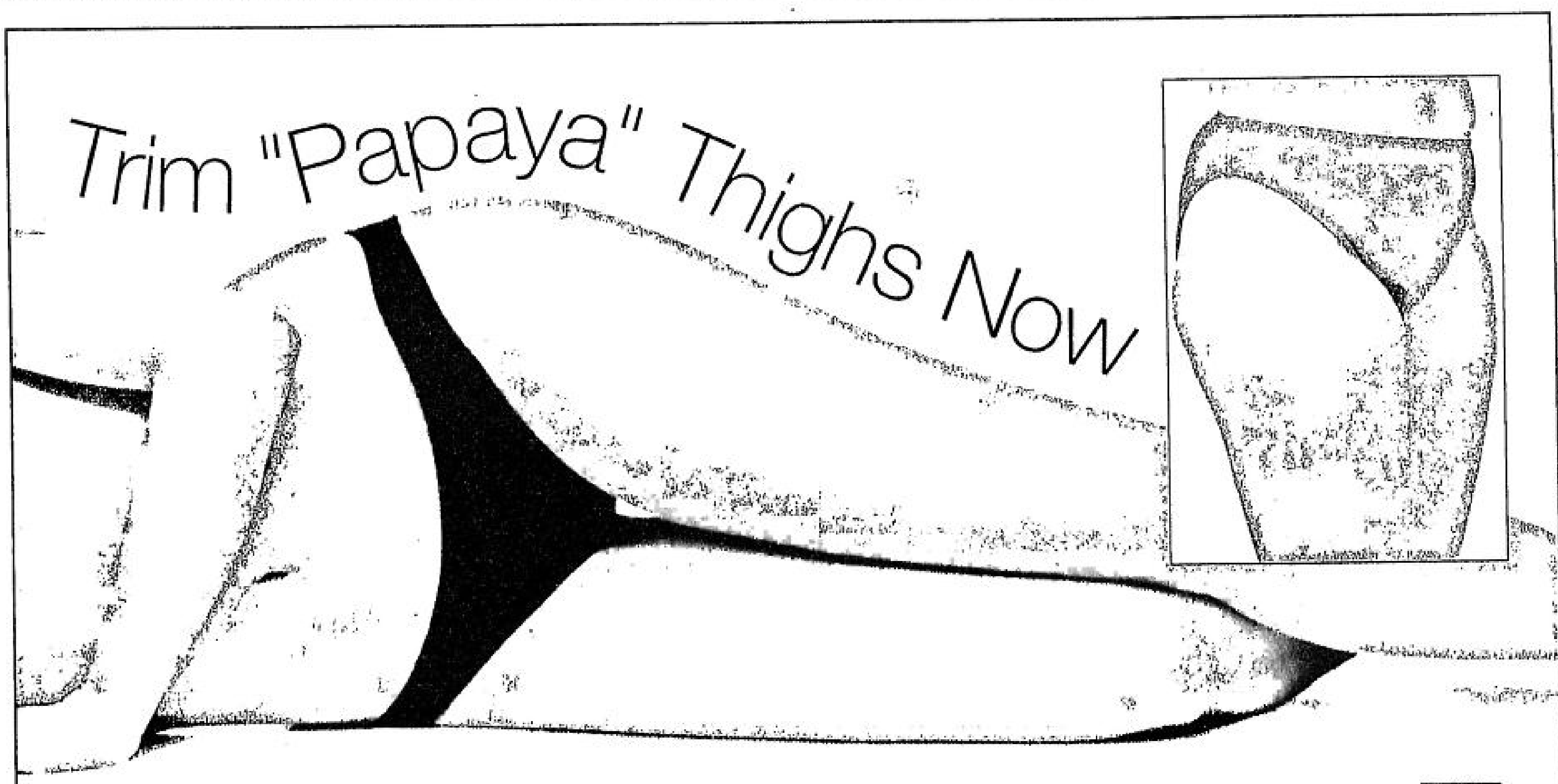

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Church poll watchdog supports CBCP stand

By Christian V. Esguerra

THE PARISH Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting, a Church-backed group which monitored the conduct of the 2004 elections, yesterday supported "in principle" the decision of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines not to demand the resignation of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

But the PPCRV raised a crucial question on the bishops' call for Ms Arroyo to examine her conscience.

"What if her conscience has been too plump with the calluses of insensitivity and self-political interest, can she still make a morally acceptable decision?," the group asked.

In a statement, the PPCRV floated this possibility after the CBCP asked the President "to discern deeply to what extent she might have contributed to the erosion of effective governance and whether the erosion is so severe as to be irreversible."

Bishops were also asked about a similar scenario when they read their official statement at the end of their 91st plenary assembly last Sunday. Bishop Emeritus Teodoro Bacani said, "we cannot impose on her to decide to resign."

The PPCRV, whose honorary chairman was the late Jaime Cardinal Sin, is the Catholic Church's arm that monitors the conduct of elections. Its 400,000 members are usually deployed to voting precincts and counting centers nationwide during the elections.

Its board of advisers is composed of seven bishops, including Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Rosales.

In its statement, the PPCRV indicated that the public would not actually be held hostage in case Ms Arroyo, convinced that she was the duly elected president, continued to cling on to power despite mounting calls for her resignation.

The group cited the CBCP reminder that resignation calls, including demands that the President be impeached or investigated by a truth commission, were "not against the Gospel."

The group also wants the Commission on Elections to investigate allegations of fraud during the 2004 elections with "full public transparency."

The PPCRV also urged Comelec to use the August elections in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao as a "showcase of honest, orderly and peaceful elections."

The National Citizens Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel) also said it was supporting the creation of the Truth Commission following CBCP's call for "a thorough, credible and independent process" to resolve the current controversy concerning Ms Arroyo.

In a letter to its chapters nationwide, Namfrel national co-chairman Jose Concepcion Jr. and Bishop Dinualdo Gutierrez said the creation of such a commission will lead to establishing "a more exacting moral discernment beyond political allegiances and alignments."

Church hits Cebu vasectomy club

By Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—Msgr. Achilles Dakay, Cebu Archdiocese Family Life Apostolate director, is urging members of a Cebu-based organization to stop their campaign to persuade fathers to undergo vasectomy, a nonsurgical procedure that will prevent them from siring children.

"They should stop it. It is morally wrong," Dakay said, referring to the information and education launched by the Bisayang Maginoo Club (BMC).

The BMC is the first organization of vasectomized men in the country. It has 130 members since it was set up in April.

At least 30 vasectomized husbands and their wives were presented last Saturday at the Baking Medical Center in Minglanilla town, about 16 km south of here, to promote vasectomy.

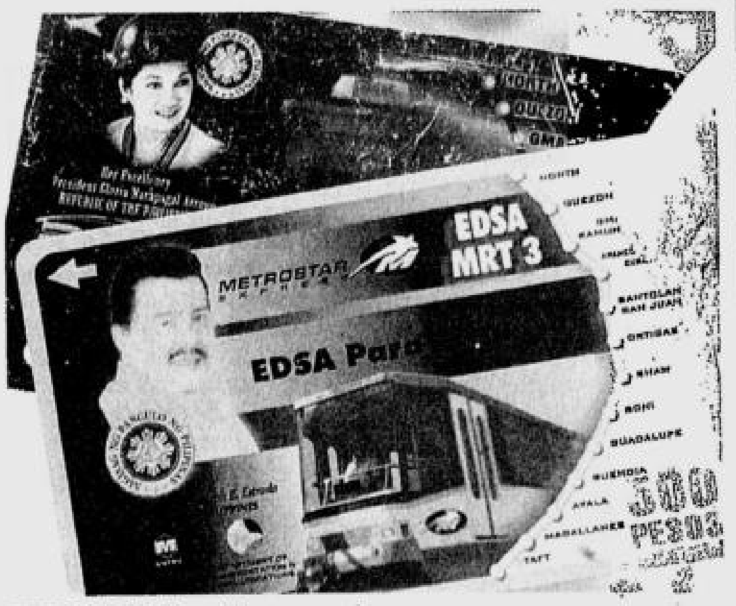
Physicians Alfredo and Saleshes Baking do free vasectomy as part of their personal campaign to promote family planning for poverty alleviation.

Dakay asked Msgr. Esteban Binghay, the parish priest in Minglanilla, to take action because the Bakings belong to his parish.

Dakay added that the different parish priests should remind their parishioners about the Church's stand against artificial family planning including vasectomy.

Erap to undergo facelift on 2 million LRT cards

By Clarissa S. Batino



THE ESTRADA and Arroyo cards.

THE LIGHT Rail Transit Authority yesterday said that it would subject to a makeover the more than 2 million unused electronic cards bearing the face of ousted President Joseph Estrada before issuing them to the public.

LRTA administrator Mel Robles yesterday said they plan to stamp the agency's 25th-year logo over the face of the former president on the unutilized railway cards.

The announcement came after the Metro Rail Transit (MRT) 3 said the other day that it was forced to use about 700,000 cards bearing the face of Estrada, as an emergency measure, because all its existing electronic cards, including those with the face of President Macapagal-Arroyo, were worn out.

Reviving the Erap cards had no political color, said MRT 3 spokesperson Mariano Gui, who received a call from the Palace yesterday after stories on the use of the Erap cards came out.

"We are running out of cards which is why we released our unused (Estrada) cards. We have been using them since April 2005. It is only now that it has become prominent because the (Arroyo) cards that are worn out are increasing rapidly," Gui said.

Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza approved the use of the Estrada cards, Gui added.

Four years after Estrada's ouster in 2001 because of a massive corruption scandal, the former president has made a comeback—at least on the electronic cards used by commuters of the MRT.

The LRTA is making sure they won't be making the same mistake.

"We plan to stamp the logo of our silver anniversary over the unused cards," Robles told reporters during yesterday's anniversary celebration.

He said the ridership of LRT Line 1 (Monumento to Baclaran) and Line 2 (Pasig to Recto) had been averaging at half-a-million daily. MRT 3 carries about the same number.

But the LRTA said it had never run out of electronic cards because it had made sure that new ones would be available. An LRT smart card costs about P10 each and can be used for about 6 months before they wear out or start to malfunction.

In the case of MRT 3, Gui said the agency had been unable to bid out a contract to produce new cards, which forced it to use the Erap cards. Every month, MRT 3 disposes of up to 3,000 worn-out cards.

Robles said the LRTA would never use the Erap cards until after the makeover.

"We also have those cards but for now we are not using them and we will not use them until they have been fixed or stamped over," said the LRTA chief.

He said it would be unwise to use the Erap cards especially at a time like this when the political setting was tense.

Even the P10-hike in LRT and MRT fares had been indefinitely put on hold because imposing the increase at this time could upset the passengers. *With AFP*

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Elvis lives

ELVIS apparently is alive and well on the fringes of politics!

A network news anchor was left fumbling for words Tuesday following a live interview with Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita about a Cabinet appointment that included cutaway shots showing the interview's location at a government broadcast studio—with Elvis in the background.

"Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita there, making the announcement while, uh ... interestingly enough, talking with Elvis Presley," ANC network anchor Ricky Carandang said to laughter in his own studio. "Or at least someone who looks very much like him."

The King looked in pretty good shape, wearing a white embroidered jumpsuit. His pompadour and big sideburns were jet black, and he appeared to be in the late prime of his career, before the weight really started to pile on.

It turned out the Elvis impersonator is a new addition to the sparsely watched government TV network NBN, where he is a regular on a morning talk show.

"We know that the government network needs to give information and appeal to viewers," said NBN general manager Jose Isabelo, who seemed surprised that anyone would be asking about Elvis. *AP*

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Wednesday, July 13, 2005
15th Week in Ordinary Time
1st Reading: Ex 3:1-6,9-12
Gospel: Matthew 11:25-27

On one occasion Jesus said, "Father, Lord of heaven and earth, I praise you, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned and revealed them to simple people. Yes, Father, this is what pleased you.

"Everything has been entrusted to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."

Commentary

And after cursing cities, Jesus turns and prays aloud to his Father, praising him for the wisdom that he gives so freely to the uneducated, the poor and those who struggle to survive among those who are learned and clever but not compassionate, just or truthful. And Jesus declares that the Father has entrusted everything to him and no one knows the Son except the Father—none of his disciples really, no one who argues with him—no one. And no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone that the Son chooses to reveal him to. Staggering words that should bring us up short. Do we know the Father? Do we know Jesus? Are we among the poor, the powerless, the unimportant of the world who learn most easily the wisdom of God? Do we let the poor teach us this incredible knowledge of God?

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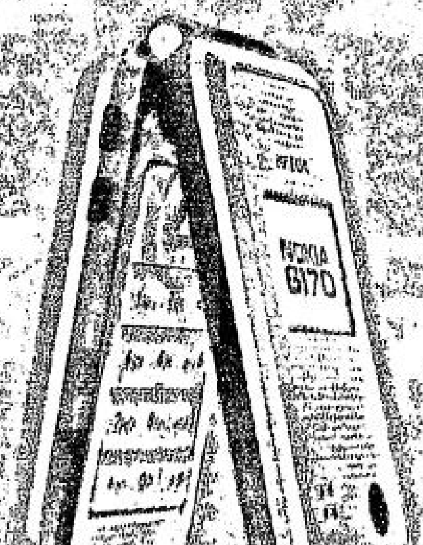

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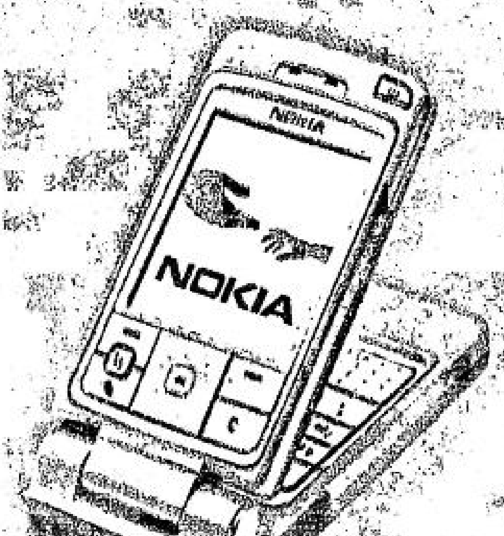

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COURTING CONTEMPT

SC orders Purisima to explain VAT comment

By Armand N. Nocum

FORMER Finance Secretary Cesar V. Purisima faces possible contempt charges for suggesting that President Macapagal-Arroyo allegedly influenced the Supreme Court into suspending the implementation of the expanded value added tax law last July 1.

The high court, meeting en banc yesterday, ordered Purisima "to show cause, within a non-extendible period of five days" why he should not be held in contempt "for such act or conduct which puts the court and its members into dishonor, disrepute and discredit, and degrades the administration of justice."

The court said it was acting on "print and broadcast accounts in the last few days" in which Purisima "insinuated that the court was pressured or influenced by President Macapagal-Arroyo or Malacañang Palace to issue the (temporary restraining order)" on the E-VAT.

Purisima had insinuated in various interviews that it was the President's alleged move to sacrifice the E-VAT to ensure her political survival that impelled him and nine key members of the Cabinet to resign last Friday.

A group of minority congressmen, meanwhile, has asked the Supreme Court to make the TRO "permanent," saying the losses to the people from the allegedly questionable law far outweighed those of the government's.

In a 29-page comment and opposition, House legislators led by Minority Leader Francis Escudero also said the government's motion for the petitioners to post a bond of P130 million, representing losses to the government for each day that the E-VAT law was not imposed, was an "illegal and oppressive" condition.

"It will also operate as a chilling deterrent to taxpayers and concerned citizens who would want to sue on valid issues and claims of transcendental importance," they said.

The Escudero group was among four that questioned the constitutionality of the E-VAT law, or Republic Act 9337.

Among others, they assailed the "standby" authority Congress had given the President to raise VAT rate from 10 to 12 percent next year, and the removal of the "no pass on" provision pertaining to the VAT to be collected from the sale of electricity and petroleum products.

They said the "taxpayers and consumers in general will ultimately bear the brunt of constitutionally infirm revenue measures."

"In the event the VAT is passed on to the consumer or buyer, what remedy does he, the ultimate taxpayer, have if the RA No. 9337 is implemented and he has already bought the good. The answer is none," the legislators said. *Armand N. Nocum*

Work-related cancer compensated

By Jerome Aning

THE EMPLOYEES' Compensation Commission has awarded benefits to the widow of a limestone plant worker who died two years ago after suffering from lung cancer that he acquired in the work place.

The deceased worker, Jesus Olis, worked as lube technician and preventive maintenance inspector at the Misamis Oriental-based Philippine Sinter Corp. for 25 years.

The ECC cited a medical certificate issued by a Bohol hospital that showed Olis was physically fit when he was hired in 1985. In May 2003, he was diagnosed with adenocarcinoma that developed into lung cancer, to which he succumbed six months later.

His widow filed a claim for death benefits under the government's Employees Compensation Program, but it was initially denied because there was no "causal relationship" between his fatal ailment and his job.

The ECC decided to grant the widow's claim after ruling that Olis' work environment at PSC may have increased the risk of developing lung cancer. The company was engaged in the limestone business and the worker's prolonged exposure to dust containing crystalline silica may have significantly added to his ailment.

The ECC remanded records of the case to the Social Security System for payment of EC death benefits to Olis' beneficiaries.

STEALING THE FUTURE

Antonio Calipjo Go

The word "clarify" means "to make an idea or statement clear or intelligible." The series of paid ads (using public funds) and press releases issued to media from June 18 to 29 by the National Book Development Board (NBDB) chair Dennis Gonzalez, Ph. D., far from clarifying the issues raised by my latest expose on defective textbooks, muddied the already dark waters even more. I now answer him by means of another ad paid for by money I borrowed against my insurance. I have no other recourse but to go to the people, for the rich and the powerful have a way of protecting their own kind. It is, after all, on account of the people that I, at great risk to life and property, went to battle against giants such as the Department of Education (DepEd), ATENEO, UP-NISMED, NBDB, St. Theresa's College, Vibal Publishing and Phoenix Publishing House. I am not crazy to have done this for no reason at all. Even if I am merely an employee of a relatively unknown school, I fought the windmills with one thought in mind: fight evil by doing good.

Would a confession that I am only a high school graduate satisfy the omniscient Gonzalez? Would a disclosure that I was once a visiting fall scholar at Harvard or a visiting practitioner at Yale mollify him? If Marian School were as big as Ateneo, would that have mattered? When the NBDB's own guidelines state that even a student or any ordinary citizen can file a complaint against a textbook, why am I now being asked to present credentials? We are a people obsessed with titles, yet the possession of even the supreme title of president of a banana republic will not prevent us from doing wrong. (Right, Garci?) Our deeds define us, tell who we are, what we are. Do not, therefore, judge me by my resume; judge me according to what I have accomplished. For ten years now, I have been cleaning the textbooks that Filipino school children are using, a task the DepEd and the NBDB should be doing but are not. Cleaning the crap that so-called academicians put in between the covers of textbooks is my expertise. My grievance. My cross. That is my resume. When even grasses bloom, how dare Gonzalez presume that I can do no more? I do not have to present my credentials to any vizier or suzerain; the hundreds of people who saw with their own eyes the utter defectiveness of these books are convinced I am right.

Most of what I know I learned from the streets, from observing the ways of men, animals and the beasts that live within the hearts of men. There were no classrooms, no books. The subject was life, sometimes roses. You took notes with your heart. You learned from experience. Much maligned by "illustrados" such as the relatively unknown chair of a relatively unknown government agency that derives its upkeep and sustenance from the very public it deceives, commoners such as I possess a native intelligence that not even Oxford or Cambridge can give or take. No man can presume to be better than other men just because he carries the tenuous and ephemeral title of "Chairman" or "Honorable". When the game of chess is over, king and pawn return to the same dark box whence they came.

In my paid ad of 26 October 2004 titled "Ninety-Five Theses of Textbook Reform," I actually suggested the abolition of the NBDB for "not having done anything to develop and improve the quality of Philippine textbooks." It was that call that awakened the NBDB from its catatonic stupor. The people of the UP-NISMED, the English Department of the Ateneo de Manila University and the NBDB are not gods. They are not infallible. That these demigods failed to identify the 2,079 errors I did proves my competence and my expertise. (Saying this is not pride on my part --- it is courage.) I am not questioning the credentials of the writers and reviewers of these books, I am simply aghast at the abysmally low quality of their writing and review. The whole issue is not about me but about the errors there are in these books, swarming like flies on rotting meat.

The NBDB and Phoenix have not been honest to the people. If Phoenix "has not received any adverse comments from the over 200 schools using these books," why did it "voluntarily submit them for review"? The truth is that it was I who pointed out the errors to them as early as January 2005. They were forced to seek the NBDB's help in a bid to prove me wrong. If the English Department of the Ateneo found the Grade 5 book Harnessing English Arts Today (the title itself is wrong) "good, commendable and needing only minor improvements," why is Phoenix now distributing correction booklets? I can prove to anybody who'd care to listen that this book contains at least 250 errors, more than enough to render it very defective. The UP-NISMED adjudged the book Simply Science in the Next Century (this title is also wrong) "poor" only because "its language and cognitive level are way above that of Grade 3." This isn't a negative verdict. It is, in fact, another way of saying that the book is very good. Masyadong mataas ang kalidad kaya hindi tumugma sa antas ng Grade 3! Its one hundred errors (including the one which implies that the dodo still lives!) belie that.

I have no current or past connections to any publisher. Can't the erudite Dennis Gonzalez, Ph. D., see that I have denounced the books of practically all the major publishers? Presently, I have a complaint lodged in his office against a book of Rex Book Store. In a radio interview, he insinuated that I am connected to Vibal. Haller? Vibal is the publisher of the book that was banned last year because of my complaint. It is Gonzalez who needs to be taught the meaning of "conflict of interest." What is the Honorable (take note of the title) Ma. Alegria Sibal-Limjoco, Vice President of Phoenix Publishing House doing in the Governing Board of the NBDB? Gonzalez wants people to believe that the NBDB is the proper forum for verifying errors in books when he himself admitted that the NBDB cannot compel publishers to submit books for review, cannot give a seal of approval and has no regulatory powers. When you cannot even correct correctly, of what use are you? Why should I --- or any publisher for that matter --- go to the NBDB then? It should establish credibility first. Giving the Grade 5 book a rating ("Needs Minor Improvements") which is only one level shy of the highest possible commendation ("Excellent Quality") when it is so pockmarked with errors that it could double as SpongeBob SquarePants does not show credible judgment. My going to media and the people was the right decision. The National Book Development Board should be developing books, not --- dammit --- publishers!

I wonder what the parents of the students of the over 200 schools using these defective textbooks are thinking? What are the parents of the students studying at the Ateneo de Manila Grade School and St. Theresa's College, whose teachers wrote these books, saying? Is this not a matter of consequence? Don't you love your children? Gonzalez in his defense of what is indefensible forgot the most crucial issue there is to resolve: the errors I exposed are indeed errors and they exist in great numbers in these books. I did not invent them. Kahit pa ako isang hamak na basurero, that does not erase the fact that these books are not fit for use by school children. Kahit pa kasinliit ng kubeta ng Ateneo ang Marian School, that does not make these errors right. Kahit ako bobo at mahirap, I do not lie.

To you who now reads me: Can't you see how utterly alone I am, fighting for a cause that does not in the least affect me directly or indirectly? Shouldn't you help? While I carry the two libel cases filed against me by two of ASYA's authors like a badge of honor, in my heart I am outraged by the utter injustice of it all, sickened by the fact that those who wrote and those who approved that defective textbook remain free from any encumbrance while I'm not. I continue to be mocked and vilified even while Phoenix and its coterie of authors, editors, reviewers and sycophants are busy correcting these books, using the numerous errors I have publicly identified as their guide and reference. Isagani R. Cruz (not Justice Isagani A. Cruz of the Inquirer) in his June 23 column in the Philippine Star derided me for one single mistake he believes I committed, telling me that I "know nothing about grammar" and that I "should go back to Grade 4." Yet he uttered not one unkind word against the 12 authors who committed the 2,079 errors I discovered. Would he have preferred that I did not do what I felt was right and, like him, simply kept quiet about the issue of errors in books? Should he not, because he is great, instead help me? Gonzalez calls me "a lone critic of unknown expertise." It is cruelties like these which convince me that the ring had not been destroyed and that Sauron lives. Over the years of my lonely crusade against defective textbooks, I have unknowingly sullied my soul for coming into contact with dirty people, the people of the lie. There is nothing I want to do more than to go back to that paradise up north they call Bangui, the place where the winds converge. There my heart lies, there my thoughts dance with the wind. From its soil, from where my mother sprang, I hope to be able to grow things, for I myself have been stunted by the city and its denizens who use their titles and their positions to make evil grow. I am tired fighting windmills, for even to far-flung Bangui they have come. Though it breaks my heart, I am resigning my post as academic supervisor of Marian School of Quezon City, in order to protect it from the backlash that will surely come in the wake of what I have done. I leave the school in very good hands, under the stewardship of good people. It is a small school but a damn good one for knowing what is basic in teaching: to impart correct information, right skills and good values. Most so-called "schools" do not know this.

We live in an age bereft of gods and heroes, in a place where grey (not black or white) and gay (not yin or yang) prevail. Yet in my heart I know there is hope, for the line that separates good and evil remain vivid and clear. All we have to do is to make the right choice. Where do you stand? The whole country is in a turmoil brought about by allegations of yet another election stolen, but no one seems to be bothered by the fact that the future of this generation of Filipino school children is slowly being pilfered and squandered by a defective system of education that breeds defective students, teachers, textbooks, people, government and society. In that order. A miseducated citizenry is a bomb in the hand.

There are many intelligent Filipinos but I need only one brave enough to confirm my findings about these 24 defective textbooks and skillbooks of Phoenix Publishing House. Last year, I did not in the least flinch as I simultaneously battled the DepEd and Vibal, because I knew I possessed the truth. I have since been vindicated, not once but 22 times over when 22 historians from the UP pronounced ASYA so defective it had to be rewritten. This time, I will also simply wait to be affirmed. And I will be. When that happens, I will move to have these books pulled-out from the irresponsible schools now making their pupils use them. The authors, the publisher and the school officials must all be taken to task for writing, publishing and patronizing these books, which infect school children and their parents with the lupus of false hope, the virus of a vow meant to be broken. Those entrusted with the education of our children are committing a high crime against society when they teach these children stupidity and inanity in the guise of questionable "lessons" and "instructions" imbedded in error-riddled textbooks. Defective textbooks are weapons of mass deception.

I would like to think that I have not wasted my time embarking on a crusade to rid the educational wasteland of its detritus of sickbooks. I would like to think that I have somehow attained a measure of success, having shown Filipino school children to be donkeys in a world of horses because of the textbooks they are made to use. Because I am a nobody, and because nobody seems to care, I can do no more. I rather walk the moors of Bangui and there, from a vantage point, behold the sea restrained by the land in a half-embrace, in the form of a smile. Such beauty --- and no one takes notice! The wind will waft my spirit like a kite, and I will be happy.

Within us live two beasts, one good, one mean. They are always fighting. Which will prevail in the end? The one we fed, cared for and loved.

I have made my writing as simple as I can, so that my mother, who lives in a far cold place (the sky the color of milk), can understand --- with her failing mind --- why it is I have little time for her. I became hindered, waylaid, by the notion that doing the greatest good for the greatest number is the more noble undertaking. I was mistaken. I have only one mother; I can have no other but this one, in this life or the next. Therefore, when this is over, I will fight no more forever.

Email comments and questions to: sickbooks_togo@yahoo.com

ADVT

72 percent in Metro do not trust Gloria

From page A1

The high distrust and disapproval ratings of Ms Arroyo could be due to the perception that she stole the election.

Four in five (80 percent) thought that the President was involved in manipulating the vote count in the last election, while only 9 percent believed she was not involved, Pulse Asia said.

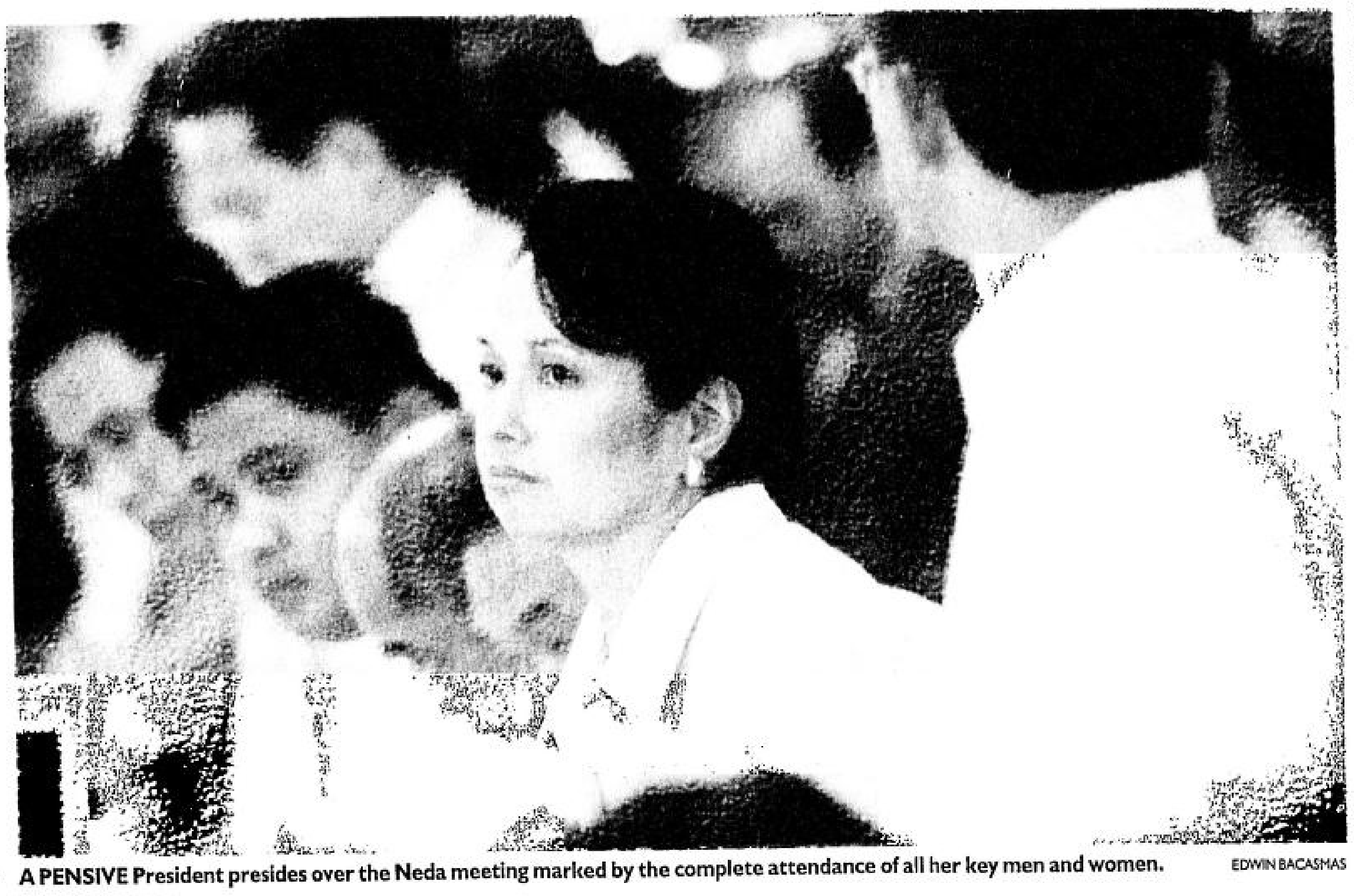
'Hello Garci' tapes

The polling group said "awareness of the recorded phone conversations between the President and an official of the Commission on Elections [Comelec] is nearly universal among Metro Manilans (98 percent)."

Wiretapped conversations in which Ms Arroyo allegedly asked Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano to ensure her a lead of more than one million votes over her closest rival Fernando Poe Jr. had been aired on radio and television, reaching millions of Filipinos nationwide.

Transcripts of the so-called "Hello Garci" tapes had been printed by newspapers and posted on the Internet. In addition, compact discs of the conversations have been distributed for free by the opposition and militant groups while snippets of the exchange have become popular ring tones.

Almost three in five of the respondents (58 percent) think that Ms Arroyo should resign because she admitted to having spoken to the Comelec official during the canvassing of votes for the May national elections, according to Pulse Asia.



A PENSIVE President presides over the Neda meeting marked by the complete attendance of all her key men and women. EDWIN BACASMAS

On nationwide television on June 27, the President apologized for committing a "lapse in judgment" when she called the election official, but denied rigging the presidential election.

Father and son

Tabunda said "one in five (20 percent) thinks that the President should let Congress undertake any legal procedure that would address the issue, including impeachment, while 5 percent think she should take a leave to reflect on her mistake."

A growing number of people, including former President Corazon Aquino, have urged Ms Arroyo to resign. But the President has rejected the calls. She wants her detractors to file an impeachment charge against her.

Most residents of Metro Manila also express distrust toward some members of the First Family.

Eighty-one percent of the respondents distrust First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo, while 74 percent distrust Rep. Juan Miguel Arroyo.

Their high distrust ratings could be due to the belief of 87 percent of the respondents that some members of the President's family are involved in and benefit from jueteng.

De Castro's ratings slip

Pulse Asia has found that Vice President Noli de Castro is faring slightly better—both in terms of performance and trust ratings—than Ms Arroyo.

De Castro nevertheless records the highest disapproval and distrust ratings in Metro Manila since becoming Vice President in May 2004.

"A big plurality of Metro Manilans (43 percent) disapproves of the Vice President's performance while 32 percent are appreciative of his efforts and 24 percent are ambivalent," Tabunda said.

She noted that disapproval was up 6 percentage points while approval dropped 8 percentage points between June and July 2005.

"As in the case of the President, distrust is also the predominant sentiment toward Vice President De Castro with 45 percent saying they distrust him and about the same percentage expressing either trust (26 percent) or ambivalence (28 percent)," Tabunda said.

The current level of distrust toward De Castro is 15 percentage points higher than that in March 2005 while his trust rating drops slightly from 32 percent in March to 26 percent this month.

The drop in De Castro's trust and approval ratings could be due to calls by the political opposition and militant groups that the Vice President resign along with Ms Arroyo because he allegedly benefited from electoral fraud.

Using a multistage probability sampling, the survey has a margin of error of plus or minus 6 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level.

'He's been a banker, an economist and a congressman'

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE APPOINTMENT of banker, economist and former lawmaker Margarito "Gary" Teves as the new finance secretary has brought positive tidings to the financial markets amid the current political turbulence.

Teves, 62, is credited for the good financial performance of the state-owned Land Bank of the Philippines where he has served as president since September 2000. He served as congressman for three terms representing the third district of Negros Oriental from 1987 to 1998.

He hails from a wealthy clan that built its fortune from sugar production and trading. His father Herminio, an incumbent congressman, has been in politics over the past 40 years while an uncle, Lorenzo, was a senator.

In previous conversations with the INQUIRER, Teves has said he himself had no more plans of running for any elective post in the future.

During his years in Congress, he authored laws that liberalized the entry and scope of operations of foreign banks in the country, revised the Investment Company Act, created the Magna Carta for Small Enterprises and amended the country's patents, trademark and copyright laws.

He also initiated legislation that provided safety nets and enhanced agricultural competitiveness.

Teves also helped in the crafting of the New Central Bank Act, Export Development Act, and others laws that created the National Anti-Poverty Commission and the Overseas Investment Fund for overseas Filipino workers.

Under Teves' leadership, Landbank exceeded profit targets each year and overperformed against industry standards. For instance, the bank's return on equity during the first quarter improved to 14.2 percent from 11.3 percent a year ago, compared with the industry average of 8.6 percent.

Britain, Spain, US

Teves obtained a diploma in business studies (equivalent to BS Economics) from the City of London College in England and took up Bachelor of Arts units at Universidad Central de Madrid in Spain. He later finished a master's degree in development economics from Williams College in Massachusetts.

"He's been a banker, an economist and a former congressman. I look forward to working and coordinating with him," said Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Amando Tetangco Jr.

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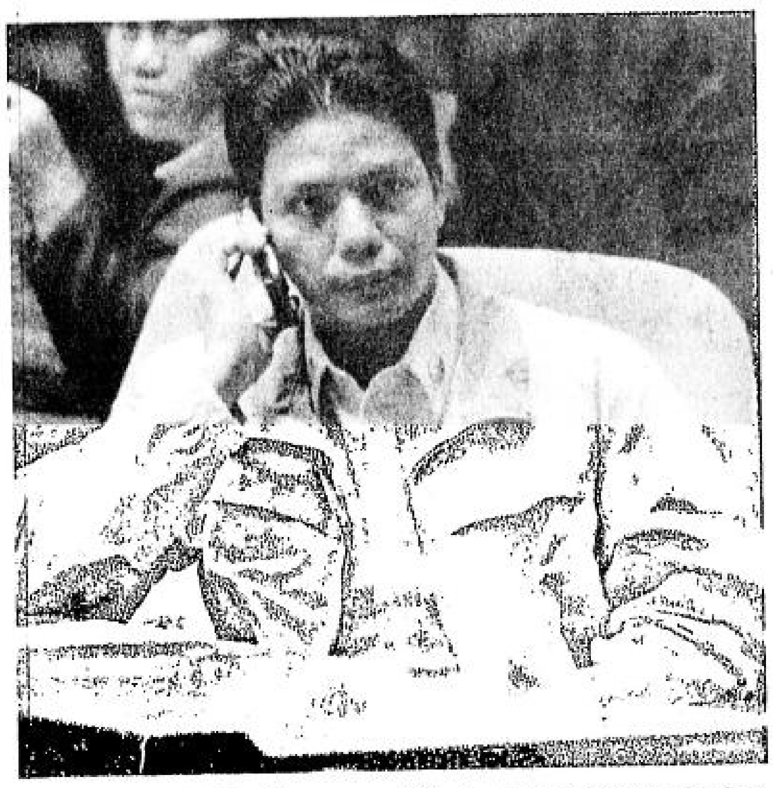
Doble sold 'Hello Garci' tapes to Ong for P2M, says lover



SGT. VIDAL DOBLE at House committee hearing on wiretapping last week. RYAN LIM

From page A1

Marietta Santos, speaking on radio dzBB, also denied that she and Doble were held against their will at the San Carlos Seminary from June 10 to 13, as claimed by the military and the police.

"I can't say that we were kidnapped because in the first place, they (Doble and Ong) were partners. We went there [seminary] for our safety because we believed that no one can threaten us there because we were under the care of the bishops," she said.

No choice

She said the problem arose when Doble's wife and two children in Kidapawan City were taken into custody by the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (Isafp).

"That left him no choice but to turn against Ong."

Lives at stake

Santos said that when she asked Doble last Monday why he turned against Ong, Doble told her: "What can I do? My family was already in their hands. Their lives are now at stake."

Santos said Doble was paid P2 million for the tape and that she now feared for the sergeant's life because of an alleged threat by his fellow agents to kill him.

Santos, Doble's common-law wife, said she had been staying at the Isafp compound in Camp Aguinaldo but left on Saturday for fear that the military might also harm her family.

ONG: Did he pay P2 million for "Hello Garci" tapes? Where did he get the money?

Santos claimed she was with Doble when the tape transaction took place at the Imperial Hotel in Quezon City in April.

Money in attache case

She said she saw Doble hand the tape over to Ong's supposed bodyguard Lito Santiago and that she later saw her lover get the money.

"It [the money] was in an attache case, then it was transferred to a plastic bag," she said.

"Ong did not force Doble to hand him the tape, as far as I know," Santos said.

Santos also said that last Thursday, Isafp agents were having a drinking bout when she overheard them talking about killing Doble.

A master sergeant in the group said that Doble "should not stay alive and must be killed because he sold the tape," Santos claimed, speaking in Filipino.

"The rest seconded the idea. So it dawned on me that they were really mad at what Doble did because it had put Isafp in a bad light," she added.

Santos' story could not be confirmed independently. Military officials denied there was a plot to kill Doble.

Santos' story jibed in part with Doble's claim in his affidavit to the Philippine National Police that he was paid by Ong P2 million in April at the Imperial Hotel.

But in that affidavit, Doble claimed he was not the source of the tape and that he was paid P2 million to lie that it came from him.

The disputed tape contained recordings of supposed conversations between President Macapagal-Arroyo and former Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano dealing with alleged election fraud.

Splitting the money

Santos said Doble gave her P70,000 and his brother Reynaldo P200,000. She said she did not know where the rest of the money went, except for P200,000 left in their bank account.

She said Doble did not tell her if he knew where the money came from.

She disclosed that Doble left Isafp on June 5, a day before Malacañang announced the existence of the tapes.

According to Santos, Doble and Ong had a meeting with lawyer Alan Paguia.

"They played the tape and [then it was] recorded until many copies were produced," she said.

Santos said Doble and his wife had been long estranged and that she wanted to face an inquiry panel of the House of Representatives in an open session so she could tell her story.

The Armed Forces denied Santos' allegations.

Lt. Col. Buenaventura Pascual, the AFP public information chief, said the alleged plot to kill Doble was "a far-fetched idea."

House hearing

He said Santos was not being held inside Isafp against her will, but was invited as a "witness."

"She left Isafp alone and she even told them that she would go to Laguna. If she was being tightly guarded, she could not depart Isafp unescorted," Pascual said.

Cavite Rep. Gilbert Remulla said Ong and Garcillano faced arrest if they did not show up in Congress' investigation of the tapes. The probe is to resume today.

Remulla, chair of the congressional inquiry, said that the five committees conducting the probe would be forced to order Ong and Garcillano's arrest if they continued to snub the investigation, adding that subpoenas had already been issued against them.

"We will ask our law enforcement agencies to effect their arrest so that they can be brought to Congress," he said.

Remulla said that Santos had also been invited to attend today's hearing.

In Cagayan de Oro, police chief Insp. Honorio Cervantes said his men had gone to Garcillano's residence in RER Subdivision to serve the subpoena and a certain Sherilyn Cobillo received it after Garcillano's father-in-law, Manuel Daytea, refused to take it. *With a report from Grace Cantal-Albasin, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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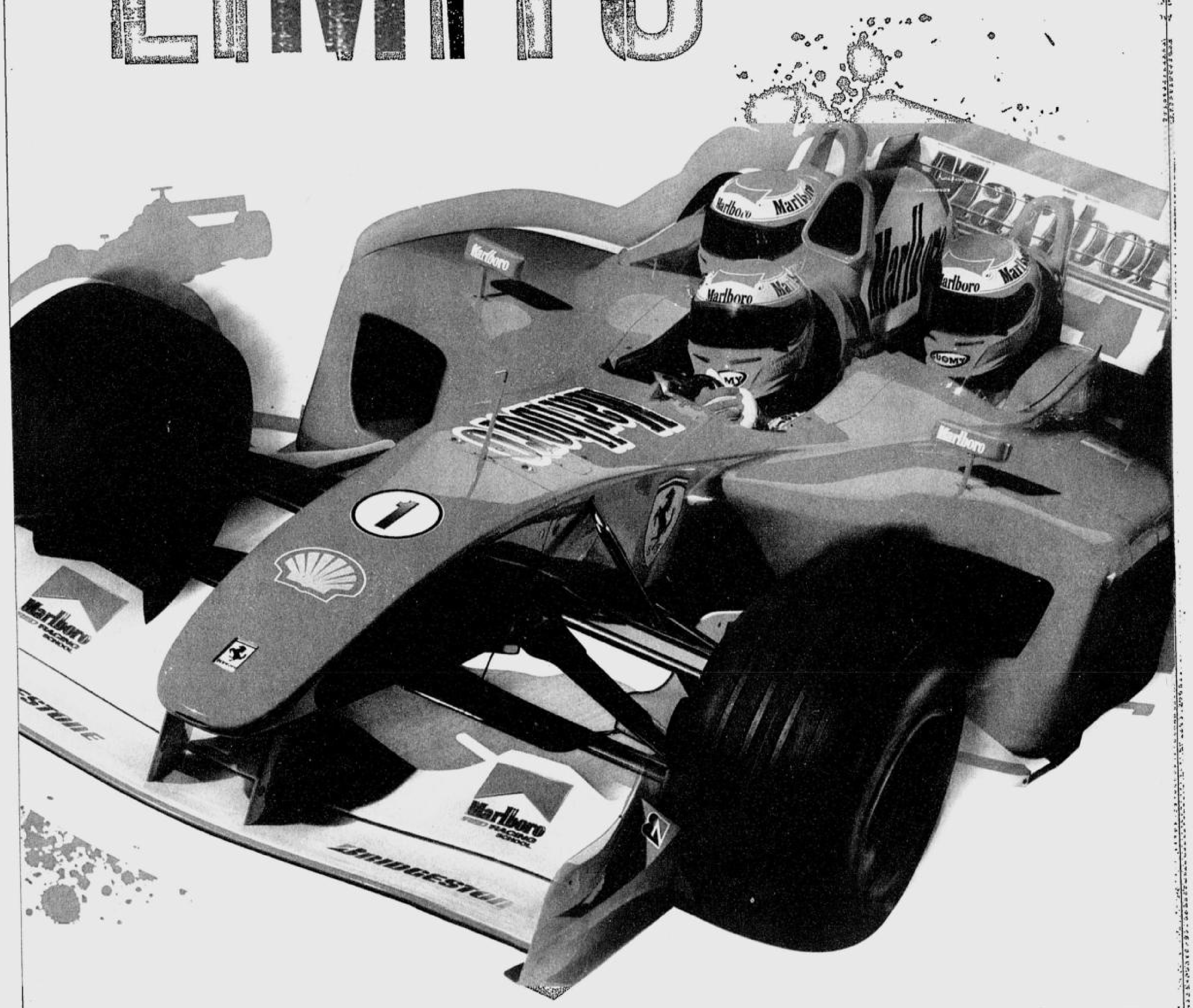
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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Al-Qaida militants escape from US detention center

BAGRAM, Afghanistan—US forces launched a manhunt for four "dangerous" Arab al-Qaida militants who escaped from US detention in Afghanistan on Monday, hours after another search found the body of a missing US commando.

In a fresh embarrassment for US forces reeling from their worst combat losses in Afghanistan since invading in 2001, the four were reported missing from the heavily guarded detention center at the main US base early in the morning.

The new crisis came as US forces have been struggling to contain a surge in militant violence ahead of Sept. 18 parliamentary elections, the next big step in Afghanistan's difficult path to stability.

The escape was the first known from the detention center deep within the sprawling Bagram Air Base, about 50 km north of the capital Kabul.

The US spokesperson at Bagram, Lieutenant-Colonel Jerry O'Hara, described the men as "dangerous enemy combatants," but declined to identify them.

Kabir Ahmad, chief of Bagram district, said they were Syrian Abdullah Hashimi, Kuwaiti Mahmoud Ahmad Mohammad, Saudi Mahmoud Alfatahni and Libyan Mohammad Hassan.

Dozens of US troops were seen stopping and searching vehicles every few hundred meters (yards) around the base and nearby villages, while US helicopters flew overhead.

"We consider this very serious business," O'Hara said.

"These guys are dangerous not only to Afghanistan but to the world in general." He said there had been no US casualties in the escape and he had no reports of violence. "I can't give specifics on how they escaped," he said. "The circumstances surrounding the escape are under investigation as we speak." O'Hara said the men could still be on the base and it was being thoroughly searched by military police.

Ahmad said he had heard the men may have escaped the base in a Japanese-made pickup truck. "If they are in this area, then there's a strong possibility we will arrest them," he said.

Monday's incident capped a painful two weeks for the US military, which saw 19 US troops killed after a reconnaissance team of four Navy SEAL commandos was pinned down by militant fire in the eastern province of Kunar on June 28.

The commandos called for support, only for a helicopter carrying more special forces troops to be shot down, killing all 16 American troops aboard.

The US military said a search involving hundreds of US troops eventually found the dead bodies of two of the missing SEALS on July 4, after one had been rescued the previous day.

Another military spokesperson, Colonel Jim Yonts, said the final member of the team was found dead in Kunar on Sunday and it appeared he had been killed in a clash on or about June 28.

He rejected Taliban announcements that the man had been captured by the guerrillas on June 29 and beheaded on Saturday.

During the search, a US B-52 bomber also killed 17 Afghan civilians in a strike aimed at a militant compound, Afghan officials said.

Hundreds of people have died, including many militants and at least 33 US troops, in militant violence since March.

Yonts said the militants would not succeed in derailing the elections and the casualties would not deter US efforts.

He said the United States, which currently has about 16,700 troops in a US-led foreign force pursuing Islamic militants, would soon deploy an additional airborne battalion of about 700 troops to bolster security ahead of the elections.

"It is a sad day, but the war on terrorism is a war that we must win and we will win," he said.

The US military provided Afghan security forces with photographs of the escapees. They showed bearded men in orange prison uniforms whose ages appeared to range from 20 to 40.

The Bagram detention centre has housed hundreds of militant suspects since US-led forces overthrew the Taliban for refusing to give up al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden after the Sept. 11 attacks on the United States. *Reuters*

BLAIR

Britain intensifies hunt for bombers

LONDON—Prime Minister Tony Blair condemned last week's bomb attacks in London as a "murderous carnage of the innocent" on Monday and vowed Britain would hunt down the suspected Islamist militants responsible.

Blair said the search for the attackers who killed at least 52 people on three underground trains and a double-decker bus was one of the most intense the country had known.

The country's most senior police officer described the debris from the bombs as "the biggest crime scene in English history" and the attacks as "a pitiless example of man's inhumanity to man." "We're recovering body parts. We are not recovering whole bodies," said Metropolitan Police Commissioner Ian Blair, warning that the death toll would rise.

Authorities made the first two formal identifications of victims—a mother of two and a university cleaner. But dozens of families were still anxiously waiting for news.

A Nigerian mother made an anguished appeal to be told the fate of her British-born son near the site of the bus bombing.

"We express our revulsion at this murderous carnage of the innocent," Blair told a hushed House of Commons in his first comments to parliament about the bombings.

"We will pursue those responsible—not just the perpetrators but the planners of this outrage—wherever they are and we will not rest until they are identified and as far as is humanly possible brought to justice," he said.

Blair was in Scotland hosting a summit of the G8 group of major industrialized nations when the bombers struck. He has said the attacks were probably timed to disrupt the summit.

"It seems probable that the attack was carried out by Islamist extremist terrorists of the kind who over recent years have been responsible for so many innocent deaths," he told parliament.

European security officials said those behind the bombings may well have come from a previously unknown al-Qaida cell which somehow gained access to military explosives.

Police have yet to make any arrests linked to the attacks. *Reuters*

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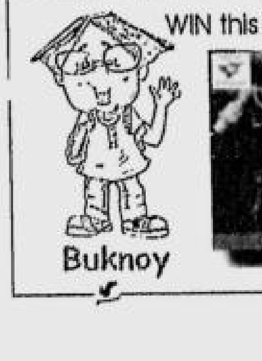

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Israel seeks $2.2 B for Gaza pullout

JERUSALEM—Israel will ask the United States for $2.2 billion, one of the largest aid requests by the Jewish state, to pay for its planned withdrawal from the occupied Gaza Strip, Israeli political sources said on Monday.

The special funding would be used to pay for the evacuation, slated to begin in mid-August, of all 21 Jewish settlements in Gaza and four of 120 in the West Bank, and the relocation of the 9,000 settlers to underpopulated areas of Israel.

Asked about the aid request, a senior US administration official said in Washington: "They have not asked for any money and we have not made any commitment to provide any."

In a debate scheduled for Tuesday, Israel's security cabinet is to consider a Defense Ministry recommendation to keep Israeli forces in the northern West Bank area, government officials said.

The proposal, likely to disappoint Palestinians, appears to be a departure from Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's "disengagement plan," which says Israel will evacuate "all military installations in this area and redeploy outside." The officials said the military fears that if troops quit the area, Palestinian militants could set up rocket production facilities and attack nearby Israeli cities. *Reuters*

White House mum on CIA leak

WASHINGTON—The White House on Monday refused to answer questions about the possible role played by its top political strategist in revealing a CIA agent's name in 2003, citing an ongoing criminal investigation.

"At some point, I will be glad to talk about it, but not until after the investigation is complete," spokesperson Scott McClellan said in one of his evasive replies to scores of queries over two daily news briefings.

Democratic lawmakers called for Karl Rove, the architect of US President George W. Bush's two White House runs, to answer questions regarding his role in the affair.

At issue was a Newsweek magazine report that Rove told at least one reporter that the wife of a prominent Iraq war critic "apparently works" at the CIA before that information was printed in a newspaper column in July 2003.

The critic, former US ambassador Joseph Wilson, has accused the Bush administration of blowing the cover of his wife Valerie Plame as a covert CIA agent as part of an orchestrated effort to silence opponents of the invasion.

McClellan said that officials looking into whether a crime was committed—it is illegal to knowingly reveal the name of a covert CIA agent—asked the White House in late 2003 not to comment publicly on the leak.

But in that time frame, McClellan repeatedly said that Rove had nothing to do with the leak.

Representative Henry Waxman, a California Democrat, said Rove should testify under oath at a congressional hearing, saying it would be "the simplest and most effective means for Congress and the public to learn the truth about this disgraceful incident." *AFP*

Discovery shuttle ready for launch

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla.—NASA managers said on Monday they are confident they can launch the first shuttle mission since the 2003 Columbia disaster, but noted some unresolved issues that could still force a delay.

Launch is scheduled for 3:51 p.m. (1951 GMT) on Wednesday and forecasters are predicting a 70 percent chance that weather conditions will be acceptable for liftoff.

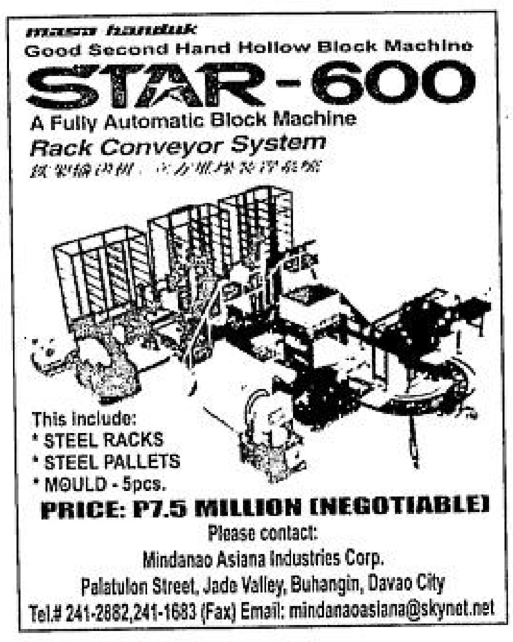
"We have a couple of loose ends to tie up, but I wouldn't consider them major," said Wayne Hale, the deputy shuttle program manager. "I would say that we do have to resolve those issues before we go fly." Hale and other managers held a long and "spirited" meeting where engineers raised last-minute questions about Discovery's flight.

"We had a number of folks that had questions... but nobody stood up and said, 'No, it's not time' or 'We're not ready,' Hale told a news briefing. "It's just, 'Have we done the final last few things that we've got to get closed out?'"

Unresolved issues included:—How the shuttle's new fuel tank will perform;—Whether engineers will have access to data on how heat-resistant tiles have been damaged in the past;—And using data from weather balloons to understand how hot the external tank will get during the climb to orbit.

The shuttle and its seven astronauts will travel to the International Space Station with a backup gyroscope and other critical supplies.

The mission is NASA's first since the shuttle Columbia disintegrated over Texas on Feb. 1, 2003. *Reuters*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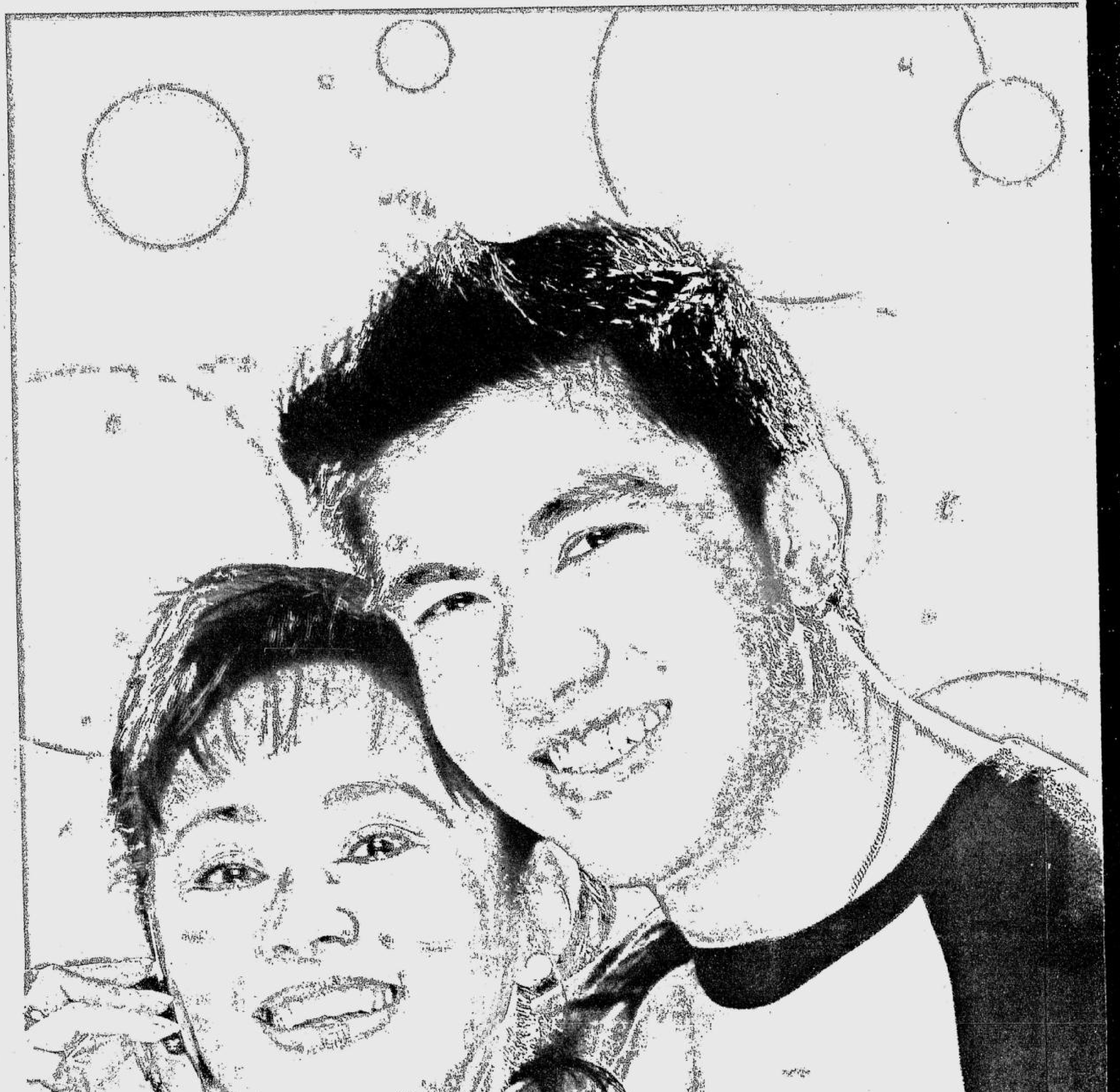
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Particulars

EDITORIAL

THERE is something in American law called a "Demand for a Bill of Particulars," which is defined as "a list of written questions from one party to another asking for details (particulars) about a claim or defense. Although a Bill of Particulars technically is not discovery, it can be used to get information about a claim or defense."

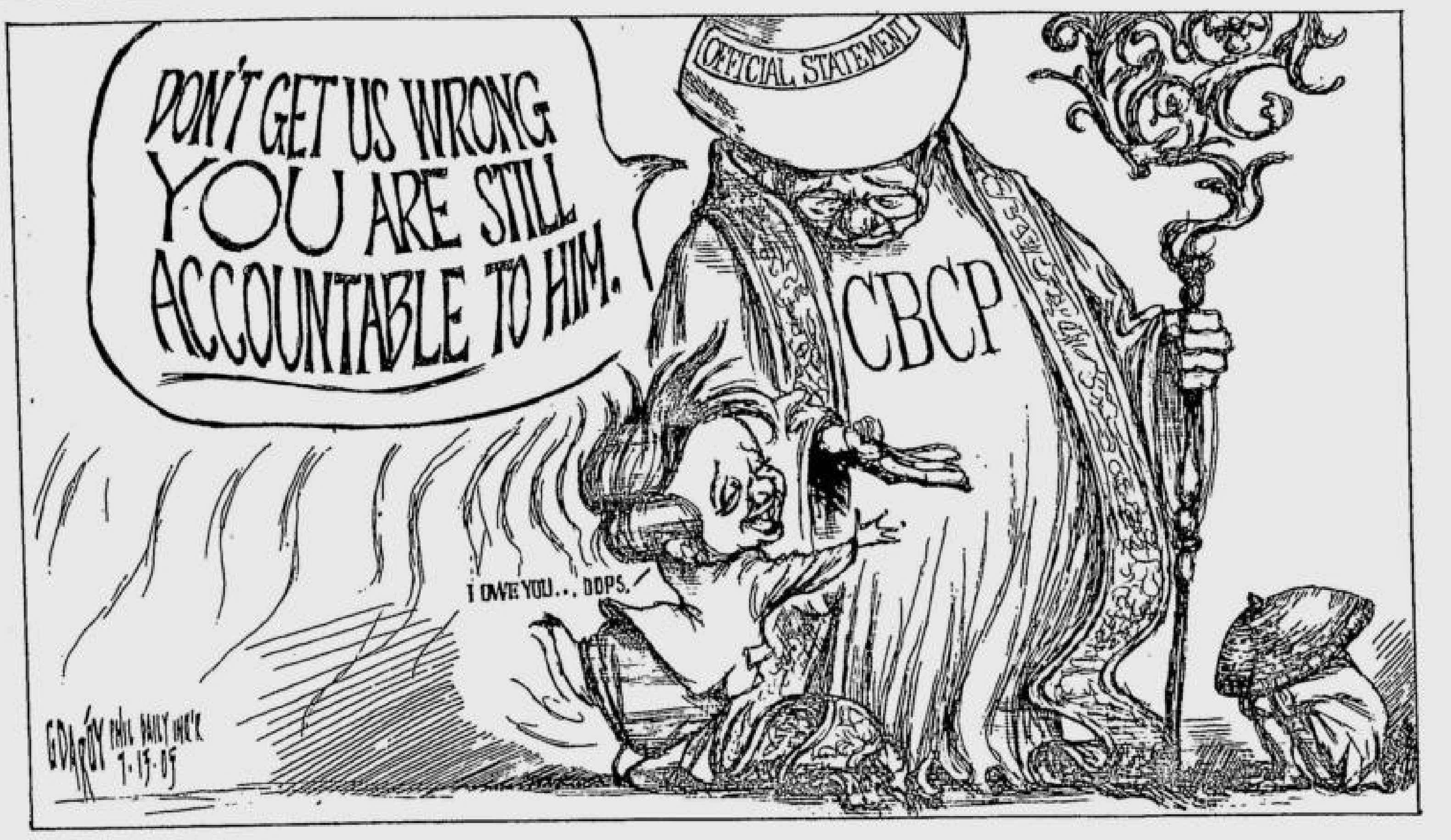
What the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines did in issuing its pastoral statement, "Restoring Trust: A Plea for Moral Values n Philippine Politics," is demand for a bill of particulars. The claim, or defense, of President Macapagal-Arroyo is that she did nothing wrong: she did not cheat her way to victory, and she did not break the law in making the phone call she admitted to. In light of the heightened emotions of both the defenders and detractors of the President, the bishops have enumerated the manner in which facts may be discovered, and a just conclusion arrived at.

One thing is clear: while the bishops leave it to the public to arrive at a peaceful, constitutional, resolution of the crisis, they do declare the crisis as one in which the moral dimension is crucial. That is, even as Caesar's methods (either a Truth Commission or impeachment) are utilized, the means must be motivated by a great end: a reflection of what the bishops consider is God and the Church's mandate to define human behavior according to moral principles. They said so clearly and without reservation in this line: a "just political and moral order is best promoted under the present circumstances by a clear and courageous preference for constitutional processes that flow from moral values and the natural law."

There is a positive exhortation by the bishops to all Filipinos, regardless of location: "We urge our people in our parish and religious communities, our religious organizations and movements, our Basic Ecclesial Communities to come and pray together, reason, decide and act together always to the end that the will of God prevail in the political order. People of good will and credibility who hold different political convictions should come together and dialogue in order to help move the country out of its present impasse." This, we believe, is a call by the bishops profoundly underestimated by observers trying to interpret the statement to benefit one political side or another. The bishops insist this is an issue of concern to everyone, not just those in Metro Manila. In a country divided by a stubborn adherence to positions for, or against, the President, the bishops have called for a consensus that denies the citizen the option of saying "I don't know, and I don't care." By involving the most basic units of organized Catholic life, as well as a broader dialogue among citizens, they have called upon all Filipinos to deliberate.

What is there to deliberate upon? Whether the President deserves our trust, and also, the question of how the President's confession to the nation should be interpreted. While continuing to hold the President to account for her actions, the bishops, too, forcefully declare that besides our society in general, more figures in our national life need to be held to account as well: "To restore trust would require a thorough, credible and independent process to examine the authenticity of the so-called Garcillano tapes, verify any possible betrayal of public trust and mete out due punishment on all those found guilty. Punishment should also be imposed on those duly found guilty of corruption and illegal acts, such as *jueteng* and wiretapping. Moral accountability calls for radical reforms in various agencies of the government to make them more responsive to the requirements of integrity as well as to the needs of the poor." These fishermen of souls have cast the net far and wide. Many, if true justice is to prevail, run the risk of being caught.

There are those relieved by the bishops' statement, thinking it virtually absolved the President and there are others who denounce the bishops for not going far enough. Both sides are wrong. The President was neither absolved nor condemned; but she has been found deserving of the highest scrutiny. The methods, and manner for that scrutiny, are what the bishops have helpfully provided the entire nation.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People power is also constitutional

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

A MAJORITY of Filipinos, 61 percent, said in a Pulse Asia survey that they can live without President Macapagal-Arroyo, and many sectoral groups agree that it would be better if she would be replaced. They can't agree, however, on how to do that. All that about half of them can say is that it should be according to the Constitution; less than half are willing to use people power to force her out, as have been done to Presidents Marcos and Estrada.

The Constitution provides four ways to create a vacancy in the presidency: death, permanent disability, resignation and impeachment. The President is very much alive and kicking and is not disabled as far as we can see. She does not want to resign at this time. That leaves impeachment, and Malacañang is daring the opposition to impeach her. But the opposition knows that this is a trap because she has the numbers in Congress. In fact, it is believed that the impeachment complaint already filed is a tactic of Malacañang so that after it is dismissed, she cannot be impeached again within one year.

So as far as the "constitutional" way of removing the President is concerned, the anti-GMA forces are stymied. That is why they want to use people power to force her out.

By "constitutional" many people believe that only the four ways mentioned above are legal, meaning people power is not. But according to constitutional experts, among them Fr. Joaquin Bernas, a delegate to the Constitutional Commission that wrote the 1987 Constitution, and former Solicitor General Frank Chavez, people power is also "constitutional"—extra-constitutional, yes, but not unconstitutional.

This is by virtue of Section I Article II of the 1987 Constitution that says: "The Philippines is a democratic and republican State. Sovereignty resides in the people and all government authority emanates from them."

This provision "clearly recognizes the right of the people to stage a revolution, albeit implicitly," said Chavez. "Since sovereignty resides in the people, the people should be able to overthrow any government whom they have lost faith in. Since government authority resides in the people, no government can continue to function if the people express lack of belief and trust in it. When the people revolt and demand a change in government, the action cannot be deemed unconstitutional. The people would be merely exercising their right of sovereignty in withdrawing that authority which they delegated to their leaders.

"When they do, the act of dislodging their leaders in government is not in violation of the Constitution but is in fact a cathartic act of upholding the purity and majesty of the Constitution which had been defiled, debased and desecrated by their leaders."

In fact, this Constitution—the Constitution which the people seek to uphold—was itself the product of a government, the Aquino revolutionary government, that was brought to power by people power, which was hailed the world over in 1986 and even became a model for similar uprisings in other countries. Now some Filipinos themselves are suddenly saying that it is a bad thing, "unconstitutional and illegal."

In 1986, the Supreme Court held that revolution is "an inherent right of the people to cast out their rulers, change their policy or effect radical reforms in the system of government or institution by force or a general uprising when the legal and constitutional methods of making change have proved inadequate or are so obstructed as to be unavailable."

Further, in the case of GMA, the four constitutional ways by which a presidential vacancy is created proceed on the assumption that the sitting President has been legitimately elected, continued Chavez. "When a President's fraudulent 'election' into office is in fact the very basis for removal, none of those modes come into play."

"Under this scenario, when a transitional power fills the void to remedy the systemic violation of the Constitution," said Chavez, "it does not act under an unconstitutional authority because the Constitution itself provides for this."

In short, a revolutionary/transitional government is not unconstitutional.

That was in the case of People Power I. In the case of People Power II, wherein GMA replaced President Estrada, the Supreme Court ruled that it was "constitutional" on the ground of "constructive resignation." By "constructive resignation" it means that it was only "assumed," based on the diary of Executive Secretary Edgardo Angara, because Erap did not have an actual letter of resignation. Moreover, this ruling came as an afterthought; it was issued one month after Chief Justice Hilario Davide swore in GMA as President on the ground of Erap's "disability."

So while it was also people power that removed Erap from the presidency, the Supreme Court ruled that the process was also "constitutional."

Another question on which the people are divided is who would succeed GMA in case she resigns or is successfully impeached. The Constitution says it should be the vice president, in this case Noli de Castro.

But some sectors doubt the ability of Noli to discharge the duties of the president. Others say he must have cheated along with GMA and he, therefore, should also step down.

How do they know he does not have the ability to be president? Because he did not finish college? That cannot be a measure of presidential ability. Several good American presidents never finished college.

What I'm driving at is this: Don't belittle Noli. He may turn out to be a better president than others with doctorates. If he doesn't, we can always change him. But try him first.

Eye of the storm

There's the Rub

Conrado de Quiros

THE FUNNIEST comments I heard about the CBCP decision, or non-decision, to not call on GMA to resign came from Jose Concepcion. Maybe, he said, Corazon Aquino and the Makati Business Club might want to rethink their position urging GMA to resign. "I think the message of the CBCP is clear: we have to get on a fresh start and unite together for the sake of the country. We have to be magnanimous about this."

Cory, he said, should hear what the bishops are saying. "They are telling our leaders to stop creating divisions in our country... I think Cory should consider her stand and support the Truth Commission. The search for the truth must come from the Commission. The people should wait for the results."

In fact, the only one who should do any reconsidering is Concepcion himself. He should reconsider being a Filipino.

What makes his comments funny to begin with is that he forgets that the Constitution says even more clearly that the Church is there to minister to the nation's soul and the State to its body. Why the Church, in the form of the bishops, should now be the final arbiter of this country's political life, only he can say. He has associated far too long with Jaime Cardinal Sin he has accepted it as the natural order of things for the Church to tell this country how to govern itself.

But that is nothing. What is funnier is his suggestion that we must be magnanimous. Magnanimous about what? About GMA stealing the last elections and ruling this country without a mandate? About Comelec and Namfrel helping her do it and reaping the bitter harvest of their iniquity? I myself propose that JoeCon be given new appreciation for the meaning of the word "magnanimous" by having his properties confiscated on the ground that he stole his citizenship, and the courts asking him to move on for the sake of the country. Come to think of it, that would be truly magnanimous—for the country.

Entrusting the truth to a Truth Commission will not be unlike entrusting a recount of the votes in the last elections to Virgilio Garcillano, Bill Luz and JoeCon. It will produce exactly the same results. Quite incidentally, I've heard that proposal aired as well by representatives of Code-NGO. My answer to that is: depends on what truth you want to ferret out. If it's the one about GMA cheating in the elections, we already know the truth about it, which came straight from the horse's mouth (my deepest apologies to horses). Didn't you people hear GMA admit that hers was the voice on the tape? What more truth do you want to know? Whether Garcillano meant increasing GMA's height when he spoke about "*magpataas sa inyo*"? Whether he meant JoeCon had finally developed a pleasing personality when he spoke about Namfrel being "now sympathetic to us"?

I agree, we must have a Truth Commission. But only to know the truth about the extent to which JoeCon and Bill Luz colluded with Garcillano to defraud the voters. Only to know the truth about who in Code-NGO plotted with former Finance Secretary Isidro Camacho to purloin the Peace Bonds. Those are the only truths left to ferret out. Investigating whether GMA cheated the voters in the elections is like investigating a man who has been caught by his wife in bed with another woman on the extent to which he had his manhood inside her to technically qualify as cheating his wife.

As to the CBCP itself, well, I am not entirely surprised they took the tack they did with its former head, Fernando Capalla, there. *Kapal nya.* The people who say the bishops did a Pontius Pilate insult Pontius Pilate. Pilate at least had reason to wash his hands off the matter of Jesus Christ. All he knew was that Jesus' fellow Jews wanted him crucified, he had no idea whether he had truly committed treason against Rome or not. So he took the politically expedient way out. The bishops did not just know GMA's fellow Filipinos wanted her out—crucifying her would be an aesthetic outrage—but knew she had committed treason against her country. I know most of them are non-Tagalogs but even they cannot possibly not discern (a popular word nowadays among the very people who refuse to grasp its meaning!) the significance of the conversation between GMA and Garcillano. For them to take the politically expedient way out, well, that is what they have become—deeply political and shallowly expedient.

One foreign correspondent asked the bishops if they thought GMA was a good Catholic, to which they laughed and said, "Only God knows that." The correspondent should have asked the bishops if they thought **they** were good Catholics. Didn't Dante consign their kind to the first circle of hell?

There is one terrible irony here, which may soon produce the most tragic consequences. That is that the bishops, JoeCon and those who have chosen to turn a blind eye to the iniquity, out of active cooperation or misguided caution, have all been calling for sobriety, resolving the crisis by peaceful means, and following due process. Yet what they are doing is throwing gasoline into the fires of upheaval, violence and revolution. For what happens when all the avenues to change are blocked? No, what happens when all the institutions of the country have become patently corrupted and perverted? What happens when the people cannot be governed by a president they voted for, when they cannot have clean elections from the Commission on Elections and those that serve as its watchdogs, when they cannot get justice from the courts, when they cannot get just laws from their legislators, when they cannot find guidance from their religious superiors, when they cannot breathe the air of freedom in their own home?

Eye of the storm? Ah, but so in ways we have not begun to fathom.

Interventions and miscalculations

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

A SERIES of interventions, together with gross miscalculations by forces seeking to overthrow President Macapagal-Arroyo, saved her government from imminent collapse last Friday.

In a day of rapidly shifting political realignments, timely interventions from unexpected sectors snatched victory from anti-Arroyo forces, at a time that they were poised to deliver the death blow to her government. These interventions came from the Supreme Court, the Armed Forces, the Catholic Church bishops and former President Fidel Ramos. They were unplanned, and apparently uncoordinated.

These halted the momentum that was building up in the movement clamoring for the resignation of the President, following the resignation last week of 10 key officials, the call of former President Corazon Aquino for the President to step down, the erosion of her support in key organizations in the business community, and the decision of the Liberal Party to join the clamor for her resignation.

The defections marked a week of sordid political betrayals, justified by the deserters as having been motivated by their perception that the Arroyo administration could no longer govern effectively and carry out political and fiscal reforms after it had been crippled and battered by political scandals stemming from allegations of corruption and rigging the 2004 presidential election.

The defections revealed the fragility of the coalition that won Ms Arroyo the presidency and gave her majorities in Congress. These defections, especially from the Cabinet, have left the President weakened to carry out her fiscal reform agenda, especially its center-piece legislation, the expanded value-added tax.

The desertions became more galling as her allies bolted the alliance while her administration was struggling for survival from the relentless assault of scandals exposed by her opponents and from what appears to be a well-orchestrated and sustained guerrilla warfare to drive her out of office, either by forcing her to resign or by mobilizing mass action in the streets, which so far has failed to materialize.

The defection left the Liberal Party deeply divided, with its president, Senate President Franklin Drilon, leading the breakaway. The breakup of the majority coalition opens opportunities for the opposition parties to drive through Congress impeachment complaints stemming from alleged election cheating.

It also gives the opposition an even chance of fighting an impeachment battle in the Senate, which serves as the impeachment tribunal. The opposition had hesitated to use the impeachment option to topple the President, based on the calculation that they don't have the numbers to obtain a conviction in the Senate, if the House sends an impeachment complaint there.

The unexpected turn of events of the past 10 days turned the tide against the offensive mounted by the President's opponents to erode her bases of support in key constituencies: the Catholic Church, the military, the business community and the bureaucracy. The rally she mounted, with the support of unexpected allies, showed that, despite the plunge of her trust and approval ratings in public opinion polls to record lows, her beleaguered presidency has not lost the weapons it can employ for counter-offensives and allowed her to buy precious time.

Anti-government forces began to step up street action last June when former NBI deputy director Samuel Ong revealed that he was in possession of tapes containing conversations purporting to show the President had talked with an election official in an alleged attempt to rig the election results. After the President admitted on June 27 to having talked with the official, her opponents believed the moment had arrived to create a street insurrection. This attempt was blunted on July 1, when the Supreme Court issued a temporary restraining order suspending the implementation of the expanded VAT, which, in the opposition's view, was to be the spark that would ignite widespread public unrest. This timely intervention gave the government a breathing spell. This was the first case of miscalculation by regime opponents.

Last Friday, Ms Aquino called for the President's resignation, after the 10 Cabinet members had announced their resignation and the Liberal Party asked the President to step down. It appears these moves were intended to create a bandwagon for the resignation call or to influence the military and the Church to support that call.

On the same day, alignments crystallized. Miscalculation No. 2 came when the Armed Forces declared neutrality, disappointing those who wanted the President to resign.

At 5 p.m. Friday, Ramos came to the rescue of the President. He declared on national TV that he was backing the government and rejecting the resignation call.

Ramos' dramatic appearance is believed to have blunted, if not neutralized, the impact of Ms Aquino's call and the Cabinet resignations. It appeared to have set back the momentum of the resignation move.

On Sunday afternoon, the Catholic bishops declared they were not demanding the President's resignation. But they also said they did not encourage her "to dismiss such a call from others." The decision was reported to have been influenced by a message from the Vatican admonishing the bishops "not to meddle in politics." The much-awaited decision came as a blow to the regime opponents who had expected backing from the bishops.

These unexpected interventions by Ramos and the Church allowed the government to hold the line. The President's opponents miscalculated the timing for setting off the explosion that would topple the government. The powder was not dry. Had the bishops backed the resignation clamor, it is widely believed that the government would have fallen over the weekend.

Who will dance?

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

TO ALL those both despairing and cheering at the continued stay in office of President Macapagal-Arroyo after the events of last Friday, I can only advice a review of our recent history.

Ninoy Aquino was assassinated on Aug. 21, 1983, and days after that the nation saw a mammoth funeral march, attended by an estimated five million people, all the way from Sto. Domingo Church in Quezon City to the Manila Memorial Park in Parañaque. But it would take three more years, as well as the "snap elections" and a series of protest actions and a civil disobedience campaign, before the popular anger and grief at the former senator's murder boiled over into decisive action resulting in the ouster of the Marcoses.

Rumors and investigative reports on the personal peccadilloes and official misdemeanors of President Estrada swirled about his person almost from the start of his term, but it wasn't until Chavit Singson squawked about the *jueteng* controversy that the anti-Erap movement gained momentum. The first of the huge Edsa rallies, with Jaime Cardinal Sin and President Cory Aquino in attendance, took place in November of 2000, but it wasn't until January of the next year, in the midst of the contentious daily Senate impeachment hearings, that "Edsa Dos" erupted, resulting in Erap's ouster, imprisonment and trial.

All I'm saying is that it may have been unrealistic, to say the least, to expect the Arroyo government to crumble last Friday after the multiple blows dealt to her presidency. Indeed, the collective resignation of 10 senior government officials, the withdrawal of support by key business, civil society and political organizations, as well as the call for her resignation by "Tita Cory," were serious blows. But they have merely weakened and shaken Ms Arroyo. It will take much more to bring her to the brink of resignation. At the same time, she has displayed an impressive capacity for hitting back at her opponents, as well as marshalling forces in her favor. But whoever said politics was a picnic?

* * *

THE PRO-ARROYO camp, meanwhile, shouldn't be cheering just yet. The President is on slippery footing.

Yesterday, Pulse Asia revealed that GMA's popularity and credibility ratings have reached their lowest level since she took office in 2001. It's entirely possible that, despite the cheerful smiles of the pro-administration legislators and local officials who've surrounded the President's tiny form, we're seeing the beginning of the end.

Other groups expected to take a stand on the Gloria-Garci controversy and the call for the President's resignation may have found a way out by invoking the "rule of law" and asking that the truth behind those allegations of wrongdoing be revealed. But if nothing happens soon (the President after all had already turned down calls for the formal convening of a Truth Commission), then people's patience, including the good Catholic bishops', might be strained beyond control.

How does President Arroyo propose to address the issues raised regarding the veracity of the tapes, for instance? She has already admitted and apologized for a "lapse in judgment" in talking with an election official. But she will need to say more to fully satisfy public doubts about the conduct of last year's elections. Who was the election official she talked with? What did they talk about? And did their conversation result in substantially altering the result of the election, in which case she cheated her way to the presidency? For now, those questions have been sidelined, but they are still hovering in people's minds and need to be answered.

* * *

"THE TROUBLE is that nobody has danced," a friend noted, commenting, even before Friday's events, on the seemingly tepid public response to "juetengate" and the tapes.

She was referring, of course, to the gleeful "dance" of former Sen. Tessie Aquino Oreta on the Senate floor after the Senate impeachment court voted against the opening of the "second envelope." It wasn't only frustration at being blocked from finding out the whole truth that drove thousands of people out of their homes that evening. A big part of their sentiments was also anger at what looked like Oreta's arrogance and misplaced glee.

What will finally rile the Filipino people enough to shake us out of our seeming stupor? Susan Roces has already screamed out her denunciations. Tita Cory has even reiterated her prayerful call for the President's resignation. Who needs to dance before the President is shaken from her roost?

* * *

I HAVE my own candidates. For starters, there's that photo in yesterday's INQUIRER of local executives surrounding a seated GMA. They have their arms raised, fist pumping the air, looking victorious, like conquering heroes. But who exactly have they defeated? And what have they won?

Then there's that "family values" photo op of the President, her daughter Luli, son Dato and daughter-in-law Kakai and their daughter, strolling along the seawall on Roxas Boulevard, taking in the sea air and sunshine. The President might have wanted to prove that life goes on despite the rocky events of the past weeks. But the scene left a sour taste in the mouth because, largely by her doing, the rest of the country has been derailed from its normal business.

If these aren't enough to draw public ire, then perhaps the "Resign" forces might need to concoct scenarios to draw out similar displays of arrogance and smugness in the face of rising public sentiment. The push will not come from the protesters, no matter if their protest actions escalate. Someone from the administration side, if not the President herself, will have to "dance" before the heavens fall.

People go the other way

COMMENTARY

Denis Murphy

URBAN poor people have apparently walked away from their leaders over the presidential political issues. It may remind some of us of one of the most unusual rallies which occurred during martial law.

It was 1975 and President Gerald Ford was in Malacañang. A large crowd for that time, of maybe 1,500 people, was gathered near Legarda, preparing to march to the Palace. It was night when the march started and, as expected, the police blocked the street. For half an hour nothing moved as negotiations were carried on. Then there were shouts in the rear of the march and when the leaders looked around, they saw the people heading in the other direction. It was a wonderful night. Thousands joined the march, cars blew their horns. The people marched down España through Quiapo as if it were liberation day and held a huge dance/rally/party in Plaza Miranda. The police didn't care where they went as long as they avoided Malacañang. The leaders hurried to catch up.

Our political and civil society leaders should look around now. The people are not following them. Ordinary people, including the very poor, show little interest in doing anything about *jueteng* and the wiretapping scandal. A large segment of the urban poor, for example, who met last June 13 at the Ateneo de Manila University, decided to continue negotiating with President Macapagal-Arroyo over land, water, food prices and evictions rather than join protest actions. This decision was ratified on June 22 by urban poor leaders from Mindanao, Visayas, Bicol and other parts of Luzon.

The poor have also shown how they feel by staying away for the most part from the protest rallies.

Poor people believe the wiretapping case is important and they want to discuss it, they said at the meetings, but they don't see anything coming out of a change of regime right now. Past experience has shown it makes little difference to the poor who the president is, since there is rarely any change in their lives. In addition, problems have now piled up for the poor: abnormally high prices, deteriorating schools, evictions done with little regard for the law, the mauling of the two land programs that most benefited the poor, the Community Mortgage Program and the Land Proclamation Program that together have helped close to 400,000 families over the years. There is little joy now in urban poor areas and less reason than ever to worry about presidential politics.

Another reason poor people have little interest in going into the streets is that the political statements printed or distributed by leaders fail to demand that the poor—and 60 percent of the population, according to the Social Weather Stations, consider themselves poor—have an important voice in deciding the future of the country. In the minds of the statement writers, empowerment of the poor is not an important issue. Why should the poor, therefore, protest for a change in leadership when they see only more neglect ahead from other elite leaders?

Poor and lower-middle income Filipinos haven't yet worked out ways to establish a political power balance between them and the elite. They know that the problem is not one person or one regime, but rather the nation's callous, short-sighted elite which controls all regimes. They search for an alternative, a non-violent, democratic way to build a society in which all groups have voices in the major decisions. They are tired of being pawns or foot soldiers in the elite's wars, and expendable pawns and soldiers at that.

That is where the poor are headed. Will the leadership hurry to catch up?

The country has a daunting task ahead. Usually the growth of a strong middle class precedes or goes hand in hand with increased democracy and power sharing across economic classes. Economic security frees people from the traditional patronage system which is no longer needed. Democracies in South Korea, Taiwan and Thailand grew strong as their economies advanced. The Philippines, and maybe India, are trying to build real democracies despite little economic growth among the poor. They hope democracy will lead to prosperity. If the two countries succeed, it will give hope to all the poor countries of the world that they can do the same.

In meetings around the country to discuss this matter, the poor unanimously expressed their dissatisfaction with the present political parties. Though there is no unity yet on what to do, many opt for a poor people's party.

No society can be prosperous and at peace if one sector of the population controls all decision-making, as is the situation now. This is as good a time as any to work for the empowerment of the poor. Political parties of the poor, led by the poor, are a necessary part of the solution.

Denis Murphy works with the Urban Poor Associates.

Political gambit

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

THE NAMES of the pieces in chess, that fine game of strategy, tell us it took off from medieval European politics with its pawns, rooks, knights, bishops, queens and kings. Victory or defeat will often depend on the gambits, the first moves made during the game, which could include sacrificing first pawns, then rooks, knights, bishops.

Think now of the parallels between chess and Philippine politics, with all the maneuvering and surprise moves of politicians, Cabinet members, the military, the bishops. The power of each of the different pieces will vary. Bishops, for example, can only move diagonally, although this early I'd warn people against underestimating their power. In Indian chess, the equivalent of the bishop is the elephant, slow-moving but formidable.

Although the objective of chess is to reach checkmate by trapping the king so he can't escape, the queens are the most powerful pieces in chess, with their ability to move across the board vertically, horizontally or diagonally. In Philippine politics, we have our share of powerful queens, notably Imelda, Cory, Gloria and Susan.

Gloria's gambits

In the rough and tumble real world of Philippine politics, most of the chess pieces come alive, able to move on their own. I said "most" because, sadly, pawns are pawns, on the chess board or in the real world, there to be manipulated and sacrificed.

As I said earlier, the queens are powerful. Cory Aquino and Susan Roces so far have the disadvantage. It is Gloria Arroyo who has the benefit of being the incumbent president. She has successfully bought time, using her loyalists in Congress to stall the investigations, and preempting a checkmate around the *jueteng* scandal by "exiling" the king to America.

Let's face the harsh reality: this is a President who will never resign. As the daughter of a president, she is determined to prove herself as great or greater than her father. In other societies, resignation would have been deemed honorable when tendered at the slightest hint of scandal. In our society—and we need to change this—even in the face of overwhelming evidence of wrong-doing, a politician will insist on innocence because this is the "honorable" thing to do.

The President's gambits have been drastic, with many pawns sacrificed. As pressure grows, she will continue to go through motions of token penitence. So expect more billboards with her cold wan smile, reminding Filipinos of her "servant" role (read Corinthians). She could even backtrack on the highly unpopular E-VAT and sacrifice a few more pawns, maybe even rooks and knights.

Even subjecting herself to the impeachment processes is a gambit; the President knows at this point that an attempt to impeach will not go very far because she still has the numbers in Congress. But what is so scary here is that we could go indefinitely in an end game, forcing us to live with a hobbled presidency for months, even years. We are a nation being held hostage by one woman's pride and messianic delusions.

Bishops' gambit

I look at the recent statement from the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) as a gambit, too. But let me leave, for now, the metaphors of chess, acknowledging that the stakes are much higher. So much of the focus has been on Ms Arroyo's survival when in fact it is the nation's future that is at stake.

It is this understanding of the nation's future, rather than the President's political survival, that should give us the context for looking at the CBCP statement. The bishops' statement declares their pastoral role: "to shepherd people in the light of faith." I can appreciate the bishops' dilemma as they attempt to assume this role, to so many people.

In previous political crises, we had either one person (Jaime Cardinal Sin in 1986) or a group of Manila's bishops (as in the crisis around Estrada in 2001) calling on Catholics to act. This time around, the CBCP faced the challenge of having a national statement. They succeeded, and isn't quite as ambiguous and non-committal as some people would take it to be.

Moral gambit

The CBCP statement leaves options open, which is absolutely essential at this stage of the crisis where, using existing legal frameworks, we would have a long way to go before the President can ever be convicted of any crime.

The bishops' statement is a crucial moral gambit, calling on Filipinos "to discern their decisions not in terms of political loyalties but in the light of the Gospel values of truth, justice and the common good."

The bishops help with this discernment, warning us against "those groups who seek to exploit our vulnerable national situation in order to create confusion and social chaos" either through "juntas or revolutionary councils."

Conversely, they identify options that could be adopted: "For we recognize that non-violent appeals for her resignation, the demand for a Truth Commission and the filing of an impeachment case are not against the Gospel." These options suggest how we might go beyond narrow legalistic frameworks toward a "moral inquiry" that should guide us to action.

That moral inquiry must, in the long term, look toward "ambivalent cultural values such as *palakasan*, *pakikisama*, *utang na loob*, and family-centeredness." I am very much encouraged by the bishops' recognition of how so many of our problems are based on these traditional values.

But there are short-term concerns as well. I am not surprised that so many of the calls for resignation come from people who take their roles seriously as educators and parents. I was listening to former Peace Adviser Teresita Deles on television, linking her resignation from the Cabinet to her role as a parent. How indeed do we explain to our children, and to our students, that cheating, lying and stealing are wrong, punishable by expulsion from school, and yet allowing a President to get away with an apology for a "lapse in judgement," translated now into Tagalog as a retrospective "*Ay, mali pala,*" oops, I erred.

Responding to the CBCP challenge will take many forms. Many of us in educational institutions and the mass media will continue with our calls to resign, not because they will make her resign but because our voices, while few right now and in the wilderness, are needed if we are to remain credible with our young.

Our voices, too, might help to embolden those who are waiting, hesitant about coming out with more exposés. And to Vice President Noli de Castro and others waiting in the wings, the louder the voices, the sterner the warning to them: if and when they do assume power, it will no longer be as easy for them to get away with corruption.

In Western chess, as end game approaches, the remaining pieces on the board all become indispensable. What we make of ourselves—dispensable pawns or rooks or knights or bishops, maybe even queens—depends on how we take up the challenge posed by the moral gambits.

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The people have spoken; respect the sovereign will

THE INSINUATIONS—that Noli de Castro as a cure may be worse than the disease in case Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo is ousted or resigns—made by learned columnists and self-proclaimed intellectuals who judge those with poor ability to speak English as "*tanga*" is unfair and undemocratic.

De Castro was a senator when President Arroyo picked him to run as her candidate for vice president. His shortcomings, if any, were scrutinized, dissected and openly discussed during the last elections. He was fair game to his opponents and to everybody who thought they speak better English than De Castro. However, the people have spoken—they voted for him.

To say now that De Castro is not qualified is unfair to him and to the people who supported him. I submit that all we need for a president is a person with a good heart—somebody like Ramon Magsaysay Sr. who had the audacity and wisdom to ask subordinates and advisers if a project, proposal, law, program could be defended in Plaza Miranda.

If we are to remove President Arroyo as may be dictated by our adherence to the truth, then De Castro must be allowed to succeed her on the basis of the same principle of truth—that he was duly elected by the people. I am no fan of De Castro, but the will of the people must be respected. It is a dictum that should be honored if we are to preserve democracy in our country.

—BENROME ABAO,
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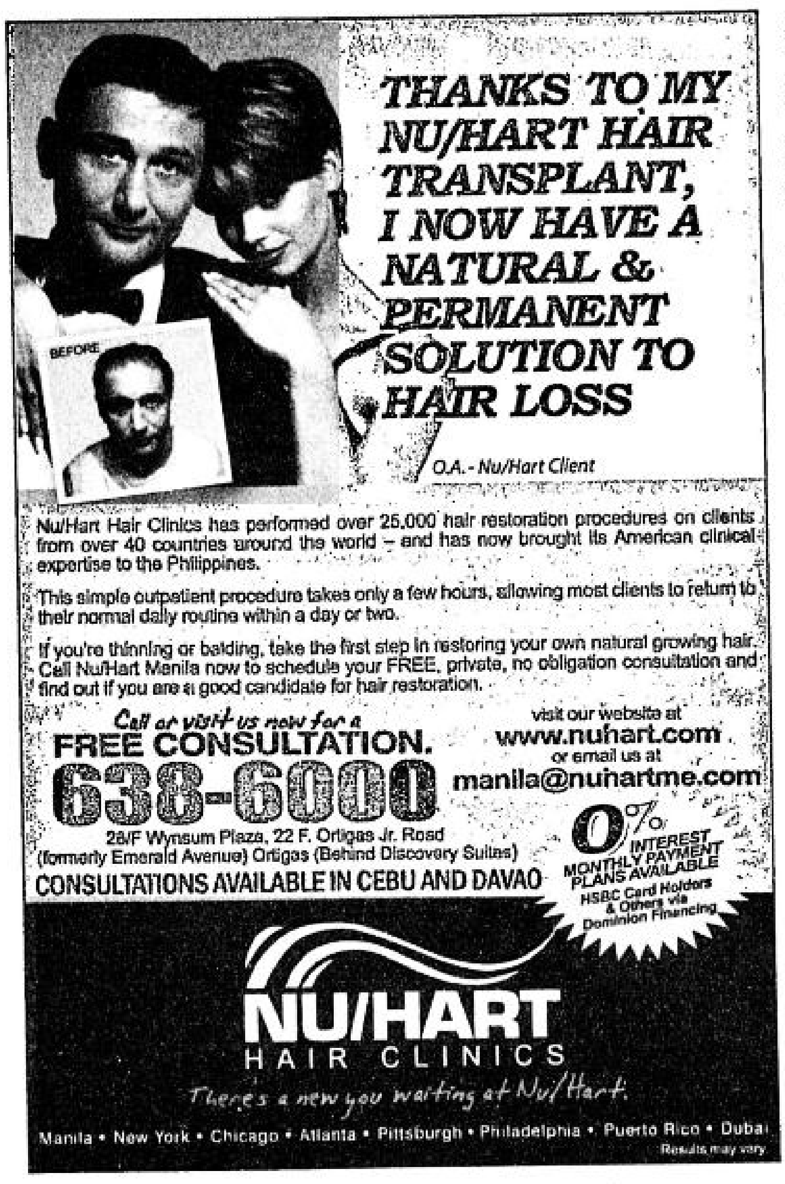
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Small

HOW did we come to this pass? The day after the President apologized for her "lapse in judgement" people were praising her for her honesty.

These are indeed times when values become blurred and unrecognizable due to the consistent mendacity of people who call themselves public servants. Dishonesty is so easily twisted.

Nick Joaquin once put forth the idea that the Filipino is not progressing because of a legacy of smallness. He observed that the Filipino has only tried to venture into enterprises that, by global standards, are small in scope, small in risks and small in dreams.

Are we also small in spirit? Are we so cowardly that we cannot face deceit when it comes proclaiming itself unto us? Are we to continue subverting our own common sense to justify the errors of those we elected into office?

Ours is a nation whose courage will remain suspect until we learn the meaning of justice. Forgiveness alone will not move this nation forward if we don't correct our mistakes and follies. Justice will move this nation to genuine people empowerment and true strength of spirit.

—LOUIE MELOSANTOS,
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Responsible parenthood is not contraception

I AM deeply saddened by the stories you recounted in the article titled "Dark stories born in delivery rooms." (PDI, 5/30/05) Perhaps, the health workers think that the women referred to in the article are so irresponsible because they are so poor and cannot afford to take care of their offspring.

Does irresponsibility or ignorance deprive a person of his or her dignity? Is it a valid reason to treat a person with disrespect?

Assuming that the stories are true, they point to two things: (1) a certain flaw in medical education; and (2) a deep need to educate the poor in responsible parenthood.

The actuations of the health workers show that they were trained to consider population issues in purely biological terms. The ethical aspect, the issues of human life and dignity, have been treated lightly or not at all.

The article itself also shows that many of us, especially among the poor, are ignorant about our duties. It does not mention anything about husbands defending their wives. But this does not mean that we have to promote artificial contraception. In "Humanae Vitae," Pope Paul VI wished responsible parenthood to be understood thus:

"Hence conjugal love requires in husband and wife an awareness of their mission of 'responsible parenthood'... under different aspects.

"In relation to the biological processes, responsible parenthood means the knowledge and respect of their functions; ...

"In relation to the tendencies of instinct or passion, responsible parenthood means that reason and will must exercise over them.

"In relation to physical, economic, psychological and social conditions, responsible parenthood is exercised, either by the deliberate and generous decision to raise a numerous family, or by the decision, made for grave motives and with due respect for the moral law, to avoid for the time being, or even for an indeterminate period, a new birth.

"Responsible parenthood also and above all implies a more profound relationship to the objective moral order established by God, of which a right conscience is the faithful interpreter. The responsible exercise of parenthood implies, therefore, that husband and wife recognize fully their own duties towards God, towards themselves, towards the family and towards society, in a correct hierarchy of values.

"In the task of transmitting life, therefore, they are not free to proceed completely at will...but they must conform their activity to the creative intention of God, expressed in the very nature of marriage and of its acts, and manifested by the constant teaching of the Church."

Responsible parenthood is not synonymous to contraception. Responsible parenthood is: (1) upholding the value of marriage as an institution; (2) looking at sex as a way to express a free, total, faithful and fruitful love; and (3) understanding that parenthood involves both the father and the mother.

—MANUEL FELIX G. ABEJO JR.,
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Media's role in gov't scandals; perception and truth

GIVEN the current media coverage of recent political developments—the *jueteng* scandal, the alleged 2004 election fraud, and the oust-Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo campaign—there is inevitably the question: What is media's responsibility in all these?

It is relevant because of their negative effect on the economy—the stock market slowdown, the drop in the peso-dollar exchange rate and the wait-and-see attitude of investors who were planning to bring more than $20 billion into the mining industry here.

The present political crisis stresses the responsibility of the media to let the public know the truth to which every citizen has a right guaranteed by the Constitution. There are always three sides to a public issue or development. This I know from my 54 years of continuous work as a foreign correspondent, editor, publisher and journalism professor.

The first belongs to the original source of the news or the one who will directly benefit from the development.

The second is from those who oppose the development because it will adversely affect them.

The third is the truth which lies between the first and second, which is the primary concern of the media.

Thus, media must be forever deeply inquiring, analytical and logical in their presentation of the news. This is the only way we can check the erosion of media credibility in the public mind which now reads less and less as the audio-visual medium advances technologically.

This cannot be overemphasized in the face of manipulative news sources—spinners—whose objective is to present their best side more often at the expense of truth. Their abuse of the press is rendered easier by modern information-communication technologies and the low level of awareness of public issues on the part of the majority of our 82 million Filipinos, who are mostly poorly educated and impoverished. Thus, there is the common tendency to take perception as truth.

—GIL H. A. SANTOS,
chair/editor in chief,
Vox Populi, 27A Masikap St., QC

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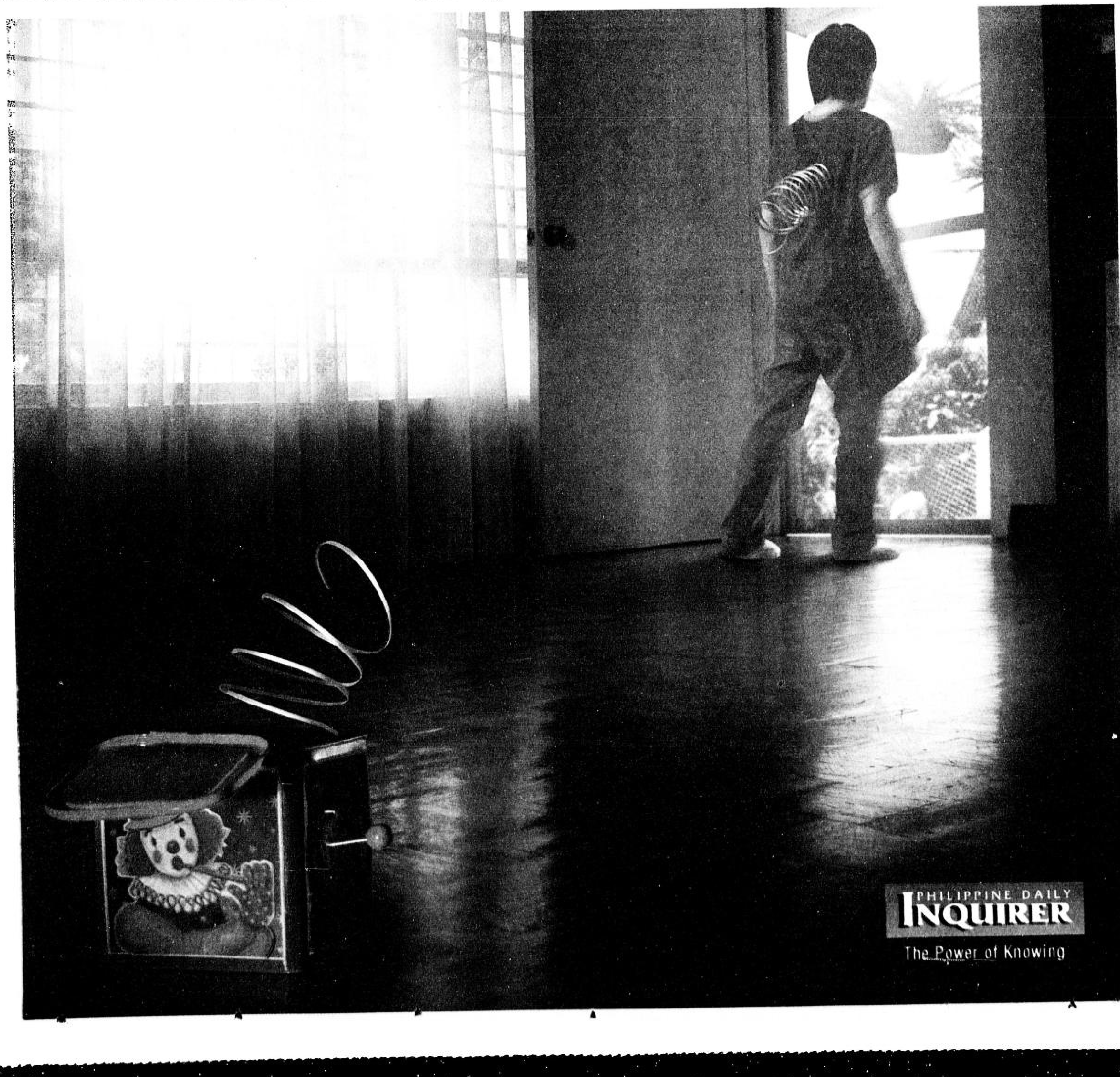
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
The Power of Knowing

AN OPEN LETTER OF PROTEST TO THE CHAIRMAN AND TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE MAKATI BUSINESS CLUB

12 July 2005

Atty. Ricardo Romulo
Chairman
Makati Business Club

Atty. Romulo,

As members of good standing of the Makati Business Club (MBC), we condemn, in the strongest possible terms, your July 8 issuance of a manifesto entitled "A time for change" demanding President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's resignation for and in behalf of the MBC and its members. To many of us, the manifesto's message is a personal opinion or the sentiment of only a few within our organization. We deplore the imposition of one man's opinion on all of us because it can only result in misrepresenting us as a whole.

For the majority of us, we resolutely maintain our adherence to constitutional processes and to the rule of law. Therefore, we are deeply disturbed with your failure to consult with the members before weighing in on a matter so crucial to the nation's political and economic stability. Such cavalier disregard for the MBC's reputation and the concurrence and sentiments of its members should not be taken lightly in view of the highly-charged political atmosphere because this strongly impacts the Philippines' credibility with the international and financial community.

The MBC's majority may be silent but it will neither allow individuals nor an unauthorized select group to misuse the good name of this organization. The MBC has painstakingly built its reputation through its members' collective commitment, hardwork, and unity.

Your unilateral act threatens to destroy the MBC's unity and consensus-building process in playing a positive role in Philippine society. For these reasons, we would like to protest the impropriety of your actions to the other members of the MBC and the general public.

Signed,

MBC Members

1.	(Sgd.)	Luis Miguel O.	Aboitiz
2.	(Sgd.)	Enrique M.	Aboitiz, Jr.
3.	(Sgd.)	Manuel U.	Agustines
4.	(Sgd.)	Editha I.	Alcantara
5.	(Sgd.)	Nicasio I.	Alcantara
6.	(Sgd.)	Tomas I.	Alcantara
7.	(Sgd.)	Jose E.B.	Antonio
8.	(Sgd.)	Tom V.	Apacible
9.	(Sgd.)	Benito Ramon V.	Araneta
10.	(Sgd.)	Carlos R.	Araneta
11.	(Sgd.)	Ramon B.	Arnaiz
12.	(Sgd.)	Eduardo C.	Arroyo, Jr.
13.	(Sgd.)	Benjamin P.	Castillo
14.	(Sgd.)	David O.	Chua
15.	(Sgd.)	Francis	Chua
16.	(Sgd.)	Ernest K.	Cuyegkeng
17.	(Sgd.)	Reynaldo G.	David, Jr.
18.	(Sgd.)	Priscilla M.	Florentino
19.	(Sgd.)	Dante Y.	Go
20.	(Sgd.)	Anthony T.	Huang
21.	(Sgd.)	Andre S.	Kahn
22.	(Sgd.)	Rommel M.	Leuterio
23.	(Sgd.)	Arnold C.	Liong
24.	(Sgd.)	Fernando L.	Martinez
25.	(Sgd.)	Jose Mari R.	Moraza
26.	(Sgd.)	Vitaliano N.	Nañagas III
27.	(Sgd.)	Noel C.	Oñate
28.	(Sgd.)	Carlos	Palanca III
29.	(Sgd.)	Enrique K.	Razon, Jr.
30.	(Sgd.)	Benjamin Philip G.	Romualdez
31.	(Sgd.)	Ferdinand Martin G.	Romualdez
32.	(Sgd.)	Jose Manuel G.	Romualdez
33.	(Sgd.)	Armando O.	Samia
34.	(Sgd.)	Henry Y.	Uy
35.	(Sgd.)	Vivian	Yuchengco

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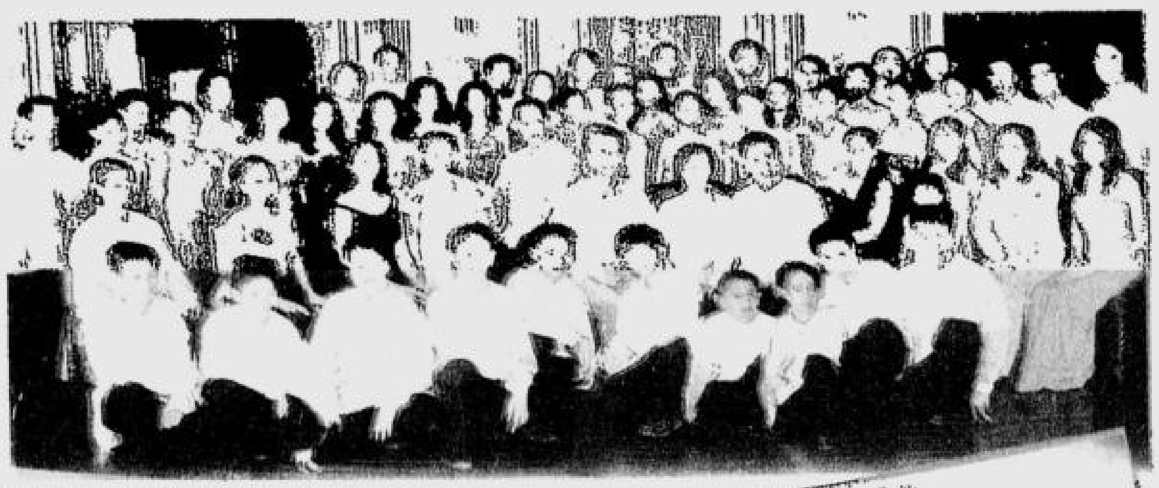
INQUIRER Northern Luzon

Editor Jun Bandayrel
Bureau Chief Rolando B. Fernandez

Pampanga artists rescue folk songs

By Tonette Orejas
Bacolor, Pampanga

CULTURAL talents that Broadway giant Cameron Macintosh nourishes in Pampanga continue to flourish, saving from oblivion many almost-forgotten Kapampangan folk songs that embody nature's symphony and life's values.


MEMBERS of the Arti Sta. Rita.

On Saturday night, at the 241-year-old San Guillermo Church in Bacolor town that Mt. Pinatubo's lahar had buried, the Arti Sta. Rita launched its second collection of old songs retrieved from rural folk and new ones created with, among others, Aeta.

On a stage mounted before the restored *retablo* (main altar), almost 60 artists, aged 5 to 70, including balladeer Mon David, sang the musical creations and performed these in skits drawn from life cycles.

Their audience of more than 2,000 went through a roller-coaster of emotions, crying, laughing, dancing and applauding as the artists performed.

"Super!" said Fe de Mesa of the two-hour concert. The songs, she said, brought back memories when life was not complicated and nature was more nurturing.

The concert was held on the 14th anniversary of Pinatubo's eruption, and as one of Bacolor's villages, Cabalantian, was preparing a people's summit to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the lahar onslaught that buried the village.

The venue was apt for the second collection of 10 folk songs and five original compositions, which revolved around the theme of returning to one's roots and coming home.

The CD's title, "Pamanuli," carries the same call to Kapampangans who left their towns while in search of greener pastures or safety during the disaster years.

COVER of the second album.

Musical color

Recy Pineda, the musical director, said the 10 traditional songs were "rearranged rhythmically to add a touch of modern musical color." These are "Kauran," a nursery rhyme sung by kids while playing in the rain, and "Patag a Bunduk" and "O Kaka, O Kaka" that are both nonsense rhymes lent in rap.

Three songs—"Sintang Matua," "Ing Malsinta/Beria" and "Eka Mamako"—are stories of lovers.

The other cuts—"Aro!," "Dalagang Rite'a," "Dalagang Kapampangan" and "Mekini keng siping ju"—are rendered with *zarzuela* touches.

Of the original compositions, "Duman" has become the theme song of the Duman festival held every November. Duman is a green cereal made out of glutinous rice still cultivated in Sta. Rita town where the cultural group is based.

"Kokak Rak" is about the dances of frogs. "Pasku Napun, Pasku Ngeni, Pasku Bukas" is a Christmas carol.

"Pinatubu," lent with an ethnic tune, retells of the people's nightmare when the volcano erupted in 1991. It also pays tribute to their resiliency and courage to overcome nature's wrath.

"Pamanuli," the carrier single, is a choral and acoustic rendition.

"It's my personal journey," said composer Andy Alviz. A choreographer of the Asian leg of the Broadway hit "Miss Saigon," he returned in 2001 to reunite with his roots.

A Christmas concert in 2001 put together by the parish choirs of Sta. Rita and which Alviz choreographed and which Pineda and another musician, Randy del Rosario, arranged, led to the discovery of talents in the towns.

That's when Macintosh's support came in, through a generous grant from his foundation, Alviz said.

From Australia, John Robertson, Asia-Pacific director of the Cameron Macintosh Foundation, comes to Sta. Rita every three months to hear Macintosh's wards sing and perform, Alviz said.

The first CD, "Kapampangan Ku," hit ground through that grant and support from local benefactors, mainly from the Center for Kapampangan Studies of the Holy Angel University. It resurrected 11 folk songs.

Alviz said the second CD project took off because of the center and the P500,000 grant from the provincial government.

"It did not take five minutes even to convince Gov. (Mark) Lapid to support the project," he said. Lapid went up the stage reluctantly on Saturday, joining the artists in the curtain call.

All he asked, Alviz said, was for the songs to be "popularized among young people so that Kapampangan culture and arts are preserved and continued."

Fashion designer Patis Tesoro, a member of the Pamintuan clan, attended to support the artists, among them Ronald Salazar, 2001 Art Association of the Philippines grand prize awardee who mounted a painting exhibit, and Christian Tan, who played the violin in at least three songs of the album.

Lea Salonga, who reprised the original "Miss Saigon" part, also supports the Arti Sta. Rita artists, taking them in as front act performers during her Dec. 8, 2004 concert at the Araneta Coliseum.

"We have sustained Mr. Macintosh's support. We have continued making music, making art because of the commitment mainly of our artists and the help of our local benefactors. We hope that what we are doing would translate to community growth," Alviz said.

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INQBOX Question of the Week

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Mindanao execs threaten secession if GMA ousted

MINDANAO's governors, city and town mayors and a few congressmen signed a resolution today vowing to secede to form an independent Mindanao republic should efforts to unseat President Macapagal-Arroyo through unconstitutional means succeed.

GRACE CANTAL-ALBASIN/PDI MINDANAO BUREAU

THE GLORIA Resign Movement in Cagayan de Oro holds protests daily since July 7 to press for Ms Arroyo's ouster. The group is demanding a transition government.

The officials signed the resolution after hours of heated discussions.

Political leaders gathered here for the first Mindanao political summit and finally declared their all-out support for the Constitution and the government of President Macapagal-Arroyo as they threatened to secede from whoever will come to power through extra-legal means.

The group, composed of 22 governors, 11 city mayors and 115 town mayors from all over Mindanao, formed themselves into the Southern Alliance of Elected Leaders (SAEL), and one of their thrusts is to condemn all calls for the President to resign.

A separate resolution called for an immediate change in the Constitution, through a constitutional assembly, which somehow dampened the spirits of Mindanao federalists who wanted a Constitutional Convention (ConCon).

Another resolution called as "wise" the recent statement of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP), supporting the rule of law to recognize the political crisis now facing the Arroyo administration.

"We vow not to recognize any leader who will take over the government," Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte summed up in his closing remark, which about summarized the result of the summit.

The Mindanao leaders punctuated their resolve by "standing up" which was followed by deafening applause.

After the summit, the group composed of noncommissioned officers of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, the Philippine National Police and the Bureau of Jail and Bureau of Fire Protection read a statement expressing their support to the present government and condemning all acts that seek the President's ouster.

North Cotabato Gov. Emmanuel Piñol, who presided the assembly, also noted that constituent assembly would expedite tedious and long process compared to constitutional convention.

Arturo Davin, mayor of Davao del Sur town of Magsaysay, said he would favor more the creation of an independent Mindanao from a federal Philippines because he has grown tired of the centralized government in Manila.

"It's better if we are on our own," Davin said.

Misamis Oriental Gov. Loreto Leo Ocampos said any successful but unconstitutional manner of unseating the president would mean an independence for Mindanao.

"All governors of Mindanao will declare their respective provinces independent republics," Ocampos said.

Outside the hotel where the summit was held, militant groups staged their oust-GMA protest.

Sarangani governor Miguel Rene Dominguez said: "Manila is not the Philippines. Manila people should stop deciding for the destiny of this nation."

"It's now high time for us to cut the umbilical cord so Mindanao can move on. We need to focus on the island's development," Dominguez, the youngest governor of Mindanao, said.

Meanwhile, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) is not too keen about the idea of a separate Mindanao Republic.

Germelina Lacorte, Dennis Jay Santos, Anthony Allada, Rolly Pinsoy, Ryan Rosauro, Aquiles Zonio, Grace Cantal-Albasin, PDI Mindanao Bureau

200 Bicolano leaders troop to Malacañang in bid to back GMA

NAGA CITY—Some 200 political and business leaders from Bicol visited and scheduled a dinner with President Macapagal-Arroyo in Malacañang last night to show their support and solidarity with her, a local chief executive here said.

Camarines Sur Gov. Luis Raymund Villafuerte Jr., also Regional Development Council chair, led the Malacañang delegation. He said the delegation was composed of Bicol's 13 of 14 congressmen, all the six governors and vice governors, six mayors (of the seven cities except Naga City) and six chapter presidents of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Villafuerte added that the delegation also included officers of the federation of barangay chiefs, Sangguniang Kabataan, city and town councils, local officials and private sector representatives.

"There were more local leaders here who wanted to go with us but we had limited our delegation to a manageable level," he said.

Villafuerte said the Malacañang visit was their way of expressing a political statement amid media reports that President Macapagal-Arroyo had lost the support of the people.

"We had to initiate this to prove that the anti-GMA Manila-based groups are not as many as the pro-GMA groups in the provinces," the governor said.

He said the Manila-based groups, that included the Makati Business Club, have no provincial constituents compared to the business groups based in the provinces.

Villafuerte said that in Bicol, 85 percent of elective government officials supported GMA all the way amid the raging controversy hounding the President and her family.

The governor took a dig on Cory Aquino for telling Ms Arroyo to resign, saying she is not in a position to do so.

"How can Mrs. Aquino expect the President to heed her call when she cannot even make her daughter Kris Aquino follow her," Villafuerte said.

All the Bicol governors, since 2003, have thrown their support to President Macapagal-Arroyo after they junked Bicolano presidential candidate Raul Roco. *Juan Escandor Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Soldiers seize explosives in bus

CAMP OLIVAS, Pampanga—Military bomb experts on Monday recovered at least 3.4 kilograms of explosive materials inside a bus in Zaragoza, Nueva Ecija.

Senior Supt. Alex Monteagudo, Nueva Ecija police director, said three pieces of timing fuses were also found inside the JP mini bus.

Members of the 12th explosives and ordnance division of the Army's 7th Infantry Division said the explosives were not yet ready for detonation.

Zaragoza policemen stopped the bus at the town center on Monday night, according to Insp. Whelmer Carillo, the town's police chief.

The bus, filled with 25 students, left Cabanatuan City at past 9 p.m. The suspect boarded the bus somewhere in that city, 26 km from Zaragoza, Carillo said.

The suspect alighted before reaching the checkpoint that the police established also on Monday night after intelligence reports confirmed the transport of the bomb materials.

The materials could kill people but were not enough to destroy a building, Monteagudo said.

Chief Supt. Alejandro Lapinid, Central Luzon police director, said the explosives were used in the manufacture of landmines.

Lapinid said the incident was part of the "terrorist activities" of communist rebels who, he noted, still use landmines during attacks in violation of the Geneva Convention's rules of war.

Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk

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AFP intelligence monitoring junior officers

LIFE GOES ON for this student despite a barricade getting in her way on Mendiola near Malacañang. REM ZAMORA

From page A1

"We are not stupid not to prepare for all options, but it's not that simple," an Army general who commands a unit, also told the INQUIRER.

The Isafp and the AFP Counterintelligence Group (AFPCIG) have intensified its monitoring on the junior officers as well as "suspected leaders" from among the senior officers.

Focus on junior officers

A source in the intelligence community said the monitoring was "not focused on a particular group or personality" but on the ranks of the junior officers. The source said the intelligence units were also monitoring "many civilians" from the opposition, business, media and even the Church.

ABU: The military will remain neutral and apolitical. AP

"The monitoring is from A to Z," a military source disclosed to the INQUIRER.

A senior Army colonel, however, said the issue on Ms Arroyo "must be settled politically" even as another senior colonel admitted that the AFP was in a "wait and see mode."

"*Nagbabantayan ang mga units* (The various units are watching one another)," the Army colonel said in a text message to the INQUIRER.

Military moves if...

He said the military was also closely monitoring movements of communist in the New People's Army. "When there is anarchy already, the military will have to come in. That is what we are trying to avoid," he said.

AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Efren Abu has reiterated the military will remain neutral and apolitical, maintaining that it would support a constitutional process in resolving the political crisis.

"Maybe it would be timely to see how people power would work without the participation of the military," according to another officer who said he fully supported the call of Abu that the AFP remain "neutral."

He pointed out that in both Edsa I in 1986 and in Edsa II in 2001, the military played a critical role as "initiator" during the former, and as a "follower" in the latter.

Decisive factor

In February 1986, the decision of Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile and AFP Vice Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Fidel V. Ramos to withdraw support from Ferdinand Marcos, drove the people to the streets. The massive gathering at Edsa fronting Camp Crame, where Enrile and Ramos were holed in, ended with the fall of Marcos and his 20-year regime.

In January 2001, the decision of AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Angelo Reyes to withdraw support from President Joseph Estrada ended a three-day-old massive gathering at Edsa that started in protest of the pro-Estrada senators' decision not to open an envelope reportedly containing crucial evidence of Estrada's alleged ill-gotten wealth.

Reyes' decision settled the "stalemate," forcing Estrada out of Malacañang.

Analysts

According to analyst Antonio Gatmaitan, the withdrawal of support by the AFP would be the "decisive" factor that could topple the beleaguered Arroyo administration.

Gatmaitan, of the Political Economy Applied Research, said that the withdrawal of support from members of Arroyo's official family could weaken her, but the fatal blow could only come from the military.

Sen. Rodolfo Biazon had warned that disgruntled young officers planned to go on mass leave unless allegations about the involvement of senior military commanders in cheating in last year's presidential election were not investigated.

Angelina Cruz; 81

ANGELINA M. Cruz of Tondo, Manila, died yesterday of lingering illness. She was 81.

Angelina, the widow of Bonifacio Cruz, is survived by her children: Bin and Neneng; Tato and Geng; Julius and Girlie; Mon and Alice; and nine grandchildren.

Her body lies in state at the Dulce Memorial Homes, Abad Santos Boulevard, Manila.

Interment is scheduled on Saturday, July 16, 2005, at the Loyola Memorial Park in Marikina City after a necrological mass at 8 a.m.

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sense and simplicity

Teves, new finance secretary, hailed

From page A1

spoke glowingly of his experience with the former Negros Oriental lawmaker during their stint in the House of Representatives.

"He is trustworthy, brilliant and very capable in that position," Ermita said.

Businessmen interviewed by the INQUIRER hailed the President's choice.

"Teves is a man of competence and integrity for whom I have the highest respect. I wish him well in this most challenging job at this most challenging time," Ramon del Rosario Jr., chair of the Philippine-US Business Council, said.

Excellent choice

Donald Dee, Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry president, described the appointment of Teves as a "good choice especially if you consider the Catholic bishops' qualification that an appointee must have both competence and integrity."

He said "Teves has served in both the executive and legislative branches of government without being tainted."

For Albay Rep. Joey Salceda, an economic adviser of the President, Teves was an excellent choice.

"As a banker, he is respected in business community. As a practicing economist, he has the confidence of financial markets and credit rating agencies. As a three-term congressman, he has the skills to navigate difficult fiscal reforms through legislative mill."

Polite and bland

Another advantage of Teves is his being "very polite and bland enough not to attract controversies which should be handy since he would be in charge of filing cases versus high profile tax evaders and smugglers every week," Salceda said.

"That his father is slated to be the House chair of ways and means next year is just a bonus," he said.

Salceda said Teves' appointment was the government's best guarantee that the administration would exercise the 12-percent standby authority by next year to raise the value-added tax rate to 12 percent from 10 percent.

Priorities

Teves said one of his priorities would be to reverse within six months the "negative" outlook on the Philippines adopted by two global credit rating firms on Monday.

Teves, currently the president and chief executive officer of Land Bank of the Philippines, said he would be reporting to the DOF at the earliest on July 18.

"Last night, July 11, I accepted President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's offer for me to become the secretary of finance. My immediate goal is to improve tax administration and collection efficiency," he said at a press briefing in his office in Landbank.

He said his long-term goal was to achieve a zero deficit by 2008 or earlier.

Revenue losses

Teves said improving collection efficiency was necessary to recover the revenue losses due to the suspension of the expanded value-added tax law.

The Department of Finance earlier estimated that the government would lose P130 billion to P165 million in potential revenues daily due to the suspension of the new VAT law.

To improve tax collection, he said, one of the areas he wanted the DOF to focus on was the plugging of leakages resulting from excessive claims of input VAT credits by a number of corporate taxpayers.

Teves placed government losses due to loopholes in the existing VAT system at between P50 billion and P100 billion a year.

Other resignations

Ms Arroyo will have to look for replacements of other government officials who are resigning.

At the Department of Education, Jose Luis Martin Gascon, undersecretary for legal affairs, has resigned in support for Florencio Abad, who stepped down as education secretary last week.

Abad and other former Cabinet members have asked the President to leave Malacañang because they claim Ms Arroyo was focused more on surviving the political crisis than on governing.

"I share the sentiments and I am in solidarity with Secretary Abad. Ultimately, the officials of government must serve honorably. There is a suppression of honor when the highest official of the land has breached the trust of the people and those who chose to serve under her," Gascon said in an interview with reporters.

Gascon, who is set to be replaced by Camilo Montessa, said he had observed a "lack of intention in reforming government at the highest level."

Like Abad, Gascon, a lawyer, is also a member of the Liberal Party.

DLR officials quit

He said he had been thinking of leaving the DepEd since the alleged "jueteng" payoffs [to the President's husband, son and brother-in-law] and the "Hello Garci" controversies exploded.

At the Department of Land Reform, two key officials, taking their cue from resigned Secretary Rene Villa, also quit their posts.

Undersecretaries Arne Ang and Ernesto Ladrido submitted their resignation letters to the President on Monday amid speculations that officials associated with the resigned Cabinet secretaries had been instructed by Malacañang to leave the government.

Ang, in charge of the finance, management and administrative office of the DLR, said nobody had told him to resign but he felt it was the appropriate thing to do with the appointment of a new DLR chief.

"This is to give the President a free hand in appointing new officers at the DLR in view of the recent crisis facing the republic," Ang said in his resignation letter.

Cocofinance head quits

Former Agriculture Secretary Leonardo Montemayor also resigned yesterday as chair of United Coconut Planters Bank-Coconut Industry Investment Fund's Finance and Development Corp. (Cocofinance).

Montemayor also heads the Federation of Free Farmers, which has joined the calls for Ms Arroyo's resignation.

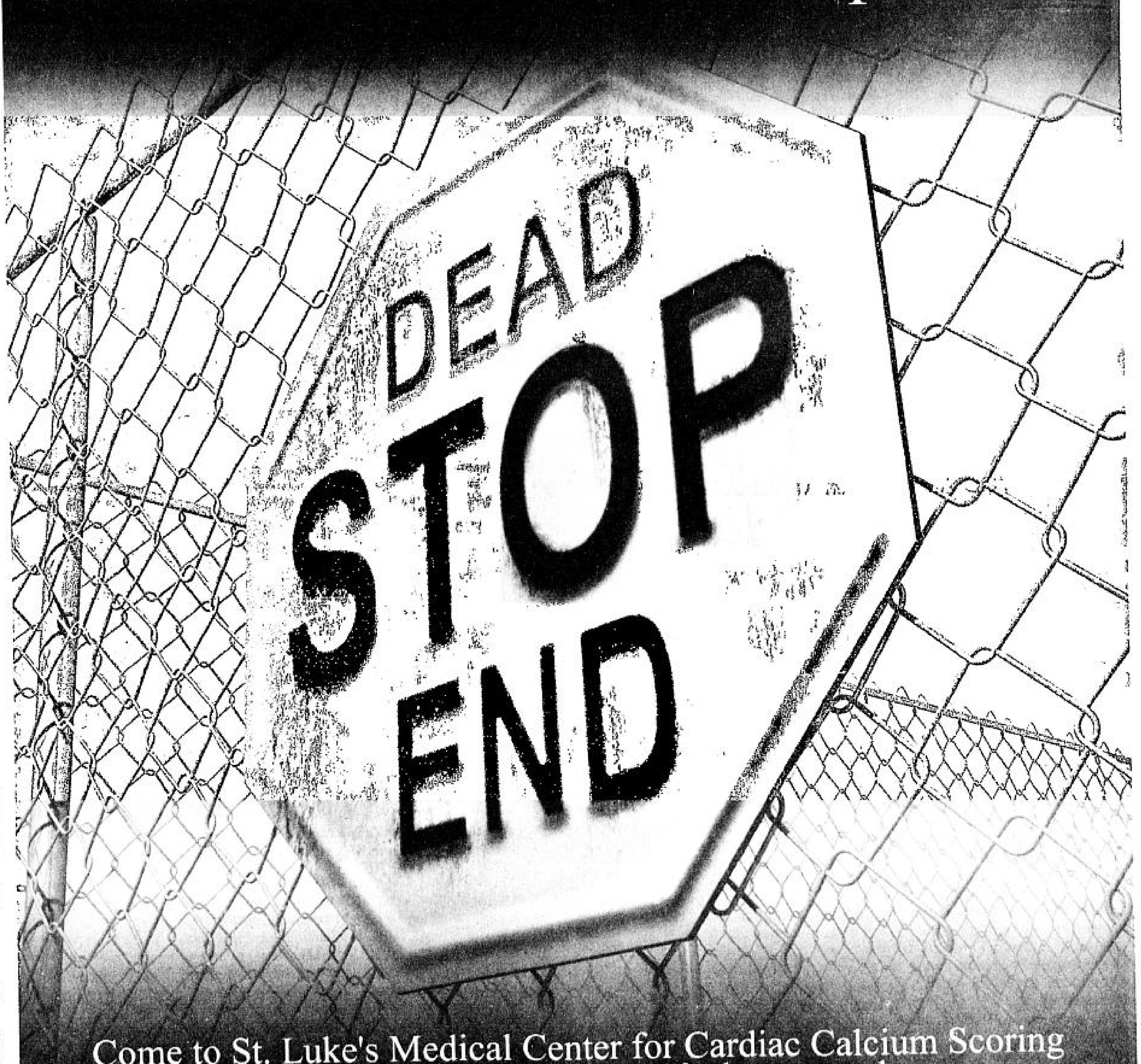
Ang and Ladrido, the policy and legal officer of the DLR, were appointed to the department in December last year after they were "hired" by Villa.

"We came in as professional managers ... without fanfare because we are not politicians, and we would like to leave as such," Ang said. *With reports from Alcuin Papa and Blanche S. Rivera*

NEWLY named Finance Secretary Margarito "Gary" Teves speaks to the press at the Landbank headquarters in Manila. AFP

JOAN BONDOC

SMOOTH TRANSITION. Outgoing BIR Commissioner Guillermo Parayno turns over his post on Tuesday to Jose Mario Bunag, the Palace-designated officer in charge until a permanent replacement is named.



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Opposition hopes to mount biggest show of force today

From page A1

EDWIN BACASMAS

"IF WE HOLD ON TOGETHER," the serenade the Cabinet members including the ones who eventually left her sang to the President, appears to be holding for Ms Arroyo and her constitutional successor, Vice President De Castro. To her left is Executive Secretary Ermita.

RESIGN!
RESIGN!

THE WOMEN hold up half of the protest in Makati City on Tuesday in the run-up to a massive rally expected today, or so it is devoutly wished for by President Arroyo's opponents.

AFP PHOTO

lice Director General Arturo Lomibao told reporters yesterday.

"At the minimum, it would serve as a dress rehearsal. We have no illusions that we can get her to step down [at this time], vigil or no vigil," said Renato Reyes, Bagong Alyansang Makabayan secretary general.

Ms Arroyo has refused opposition calls to resign despite the mass resignation last week of 10 Cabinet members and senior officials.

The rally may serve as a gauge of public sentiment, analysts said.

"The danger is if the crowds grow and start marching on the presidential palace, then the military could say it might not be able to guarantee the safety of the President and her family because they don't want to shoot these people," Tom Green, executive director of risk consultancy Pacific Strategies & Assessments, was quoted by Reuters as saying.

The military, the source of several coup attempts in the last two decades, has stressed its neutrality in the political conflict. The PNP has declared its support for Ms Arroyo.

Midnight and beyond

Demonstrators have secured a permit until midnight, but the protest could go beyond that time, organizers said.

"Circumstance and events will determine that. The people will decide," said Lito Anzures, spokesperson for Binay.

UNO could not confirm if Poe's widow, Susan Roces, would attend.

"We definitely want Susan Roces to come. We have a standing invitation for her to come and join the peaceful movement, and we have conveyed to her that it is she whom the masses are shouting for," said Anzures.

Plans call for the protesters to start gathering at different points at 10 a.m.

Threats from extremists

Lomibao said the PNP went on red alert "because we have received several reports from various sources that extremist groups might take advantage of the rally."

Lomibao specifically warned that al-Qaida extremists linked to the Abu Sayyaf might infiltrate the protesters' ranks.

"They've sent two or three bombers to Metro Manila," he said. He added that the communist New People's Army had also threatened to step up attacks on military and police targets.

Protesters dismissed Lomibao's statements as mere "scare tactics."

"The police are trying to scare people so they won't join the rally," said Carl Ala, spokesperson of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas.

Asked if he was merely trying to scare people into staying in their homes, Lomibao quipped:

"That's farthest from my mind."

Recent anti-Arroyo rallies have had 8,000 marchers at most, a far cry from the "people power" revolts by hundreds of thousands of Filipinos that overthrew dictator Ferdinand Marcos in 1986 and President Joseph Estrada in 2001.

Defending Malacañang

Opposition forces are united in wanting Ms Arroyo out but divided on how to do it and who would replace her.

In a prelude to today's protest, some 5,000 followers of Evangelist Bro. Eddie Villanueva invoked the heavens yesterday to persuade Ms Arroyo to vacate Malacañang.

Addressing a rally on Ayala Avenue organized by his party Bangon Pilipinas, Villanueva warned: "If the President does not resign in a week, I will begin a campaign in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao to gather people for her resignation."

The crowd waved green and yellow banners and chanted "Gloria Resign!"

Some 300 members of Akbayan, led by its party-list Rep. Etta Rosales, joined the rally.

The PNP leadership ordered the creation of the so-called Manila Shield last month at the height of the controversy over the supposed wiretap conversations between Ms Arroyo and former Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano allegedly involving rigging the election results.

Ms Arroyo and Garcillano have denied the allegations.

The police calls for the setting up of several layers of defense around Manila, especially near Malacañang, according to documents.

National Capital Region police chief Director Vidal Querol ordered the activation of Manila Shield yesterday.

To be activated at noon today

"Effective at 12 noon today, Task Force 'Manila Shield' is activated, putting [into] operation Task Group Heartland and Task Group Rimland," he said in his directive to field units.

Heartland and Rimland

Heartland would serve as the "inner security" defense manned by Special Action Forces to be deployed near Malacañang, according to the documents.

Rimland is responsible for the deployment of a so-called Tactical Combat Force with reinforcements from the provinces.

One portion of his order said: "Be prepared to detail motorcycle riders in unmarked motorcycles and in civilian attire to gather first information and to monitor any unauthorized troop movements," according to one document obtained by the INQUIRER.

In an earlier situation report, Querol spoke of "threat groups" being supposedly involved in a destabilization campaign against Ms Arroyo, but said the police were prepared to deal with major disturbances that Ms Arroyo's opponents might provoke.

Soliman willing to testify on gov't scams in impeachment

From page A1

MICHAEL REY BANIQUET/OPS-NIB

ONCE the President's closest aide, Dinky Soliman is now ready to break the confidentiality rule and testify on alleged anomalies in the Palace. She was Ms Arroyo's first Cabinet appointee in 2001.

cies for her to step down.

In another phone interview later on Tuesday, however, Soliman said she and other resigned Cabinet officials had been advised by their lawyer to stop talking to the media on wrongdoing in the Arroyo administration.

Aside from Soliman, the six Cabinet officials who resigned on July 6 and asked Ms Arroyo to step down were Finance Secretary Gesar Purisima, Education Secretary Florencio Abad, Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin, Trade Secretary Juan Santos, Land Reform Secretary Rene Villa and Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process Teresita Deles. Joining them were National Anti-Poverty Commission Chair Imelda Nicolas, Internal Revenue Commissioner Guillermo Parayno and Customs Commissioner Alberto Lina.

Struggle to part ways

A member of civil society before joining the Cabinet, Soliman said in an interview earlier Tuesday that she resigned because "the principles and the interest of the people I work with and of the country were compromised" by Ms Arroyo's continued stay in office.

"My loyalty to the President ends when my loyalty to the people that I serve and the principles that I stood for begins," she said. "It's unfortunate that we have to part ways. I've been struggling to come out of this."

Soliman said she had been encouraged by the "act of courage and act of bravery" of Ms Arroyo when she apologized for her impropriety and lapse in judgment in talking to Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano.

She said it was the understanding of Cabinet members that Ms Arroyo would address the concerns affecting her and her administration. According to Soliman, she saw no indication that the President was ready to do so and that reforms supposed to be implemented were not undertaken at all.

The trigger

She said what triggered her resignation was what transpired during the Cabinet meeting on July 5. She refused to elaborate.

Soliman said she would rejoin civil society, but she stressed she would not take part in street protests to denounce Ms Arroyo and demand her resignation.

"I don't think that going to the streets will help the situation," Soliman said. "Right now, it's very hard to know how these groups calling for the resignation of the President can work together."

She said she was sorry if she had hurt Ms Arroyo. "But there are certain moments in one's life that friendship and trust are subsumed when service to the people is compromised," she said.

Gathering the numbers

At the House of Representatives, opposition lawmakers vowed to gather the numbers necessary to impeach Ms Arroyo.

Legal experts would also help revise an earlier impeachment complaint filed by lawyer Oliver Lozano and endorsed by administration Rep. Rodante Marcoleta to make it an airtight case, according to Rep. Ronaldo Zamora, an opposition stalwart in the House.

The opposition was previously reluctant to use the impeachment route, hoping other forms of pressure would persuade Ms Arroyo to quit.

Zamora said the opposition had already received "commitments" from some 50 to 60 members of the 250-member House. "This is a figure you can build on, especially if you can make a substantial complaint on impeachment," he said.

At least one-third of the House must vote in favor of the articles of impeachment in order for the case against Ms Arroyo to go to the Senate for trial.

"This is not going to be easy," Zamora conceded, adding that "we have to convince a huge number of people in the majority."

He said the opposition "hopes to be able to work out all the requirements of a substantial impeachment complaint" by the time Ms Arroyo delivers her annual State of the Nation Address on July 25.

But House Minority Leader Francis Escudero said the opposition was worried that the pro-administration lawmakers would approve impeachment rules favorable to Ms Arroyo.

"This is our first order of battle—how we can have those rules formulated without them being in favor of Gloria," he said.

Lozano's complaint will first go to the House justice committee, which can block it from going to the full House.

The last time the Philippines impeached a sitting president was in 2000, when Joseph Estrada was accused of raiding the public coffers and accepting payoffs from "jueteng," an illegal numbers racket.

The hearings broke down after Estrada allies in the Senate blocked the presentation of allegedly crucial evidence. Massive street protests that followed snowballed into a "people power" revolt that forced Estrada to step down in January 2001.

He was replaced by Ms Arroyo, who was then the Vice President.

With reports from Philip Tubeza and AFP

Only in RP: Ex-presidents refuse to fade away

From page A1

In other countries, former chiefs of state might play a little golf, scribble away at their memoirs and generally avoid wading back into the messy, nasty world of politics. In these parts, it's a little different.

The last three presidents have been busy meddling in the crisis that threatens to swallow up the administration of President Macapagal-Arroyo—banged up by allegations of vote-rigging and family corruption.

Big egos?

One retired president is making passionate pleas on television for Ms Arroyo to quit. Another is giving her the public backing she desperately needs. And the third says—from detention—that he is ready to step in as a transitional leader if the government collapses.

Walking away from politics can be difficult considering the big egos, smoldering grudges and obligations to serve backers that typically helped in the rise to power, analysts say.

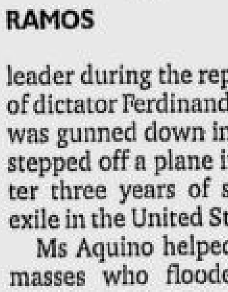
Former President Corazon C. Aquino has played the highest-profile role in the crisis that erupted last month amid allegations Ms Arroyo tried to rig last year's election while the votes were being counted, an allegation that she rejects. Ms Arroyo's relatives have also been accused of taking kickbacks from "jueteng," the illegal numbers game.

Ms Aquino—once a close ally of Ms Arroyo—went on television last week and again Monday, urging the President to quit. The former President said Ms Arroyo had lost the public's trust and could no longer lead.

It was a serious blow to Ms Arroyo because many regard Ms Aquino, 72, as a political saint and a moral compass for the turbulent, complex country that seems to lurch from one crisis to another.

Quid pro quo

Ms Aquino is the widow of Benigno Aquino, an opposition leader during the repressive rule of dictator Ferdinand Marcos. He was gunned down in 1983 as he stepped off a plane in Manila after three years of self-imposed exile in the United States.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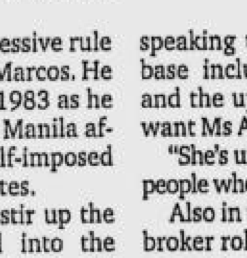
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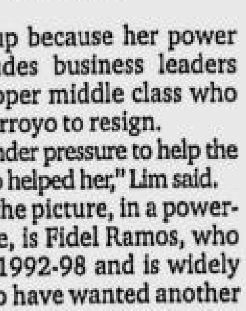
ESTRADA

Ms Aquino helped stir up the masses who flooded into the streets for the "people power" protests that toppled the two decades of Marcos rule in 1986. She took over the presidency, promising to return freedom to the country.

Political analyst Benito Lim said Ms Aquino—who's from a wealthy, landowning family—is speaking up because her power base includes business leaders and the upper middle class who want Ms Arroyo to resign.

"She's under pressure to help the people who helped her," Lim said.

Also in the picture, in a power-broker role, is Fidel Ramos, who served in 1992-98 and is widely believed to have wanted another term—which the Constitution doesn't allow.

Dreams of prime minister

Ramos—generally regarded to be a good president—has urged Ms Arroyo to stay in office for now, giving her crucial ballast. But at 77, he has been using the crisis to push for his pet project: constitutional reforms that would dump the US-style presidential system for a parliamentary form of government which, according to Ramos, better suits the country.

The former general said rejiggering the political system and holding new elections would be the "graceful exit option" for Ms Arroyo. But some believe Ramos—known to be a master at backroom dealing—was angling to use constitutional reforms to boost his influence.

"If a parliamentary system is created, he has a chance to return as prime minister of the country," Lim said.

Ms Arroyo's predecessor, Joseph Estrada, is also eager to get back into power. He was ousted in another round of "people power" in 2001 and since then has been detained while on trial for the capital offense of economic plunder. The former action movie star, who claims he was unjustly pushed out of office, still wears his trademark white wristband with the presidential seal.

Estrada, 68, who draws most of his support from the poor, reviles Ms Arroyo and has offered to serve as a transitional leader until a new government is formed.

Like fried chicken

Alex Magno, political science lecturer at the University of the Philippines, said that before the Marcos era, presidents used to disappear after leaving office.

"Something happened to the presidency during Marcos," Magno said. "It became some sort of magical post."

All the presidents lost reelection before Marcos, and the defeats ended their political careers, he said.

"They were like cocks who lost in a cockfight, so they were just ready to become fried chicken," he said.

AP

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2 die in Munti hostage drama

By Jocelyn R. Uy

SHE NEVER got the chance to cry for help when gunshots echoed through her modest neighborhood, ending her life and the daylong hostage taking in Muntinlupa City yesterday.

Juvy Montillano, in her mid-30s, was shot dead inside her house at 317 Mendiola St., Barangay Alabang, at 11:45 a.m.

Her brother-in-law, Bobby Valerozo, who had taken her hostage, was also killed.

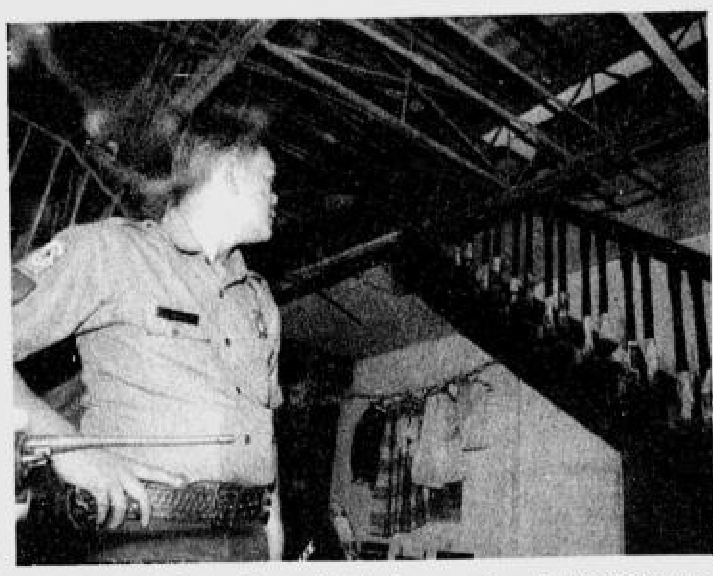
Suicide

Police said it appeared that Valerozo shot himself, adding that it was he who shot Montillano, using a 12-gauge improvised shotgun.

Neighbors said Montillano was doing her daily chores when Valerozo, who lived next door, suddenly entered her two-story house at about 11:30 a.m.

At noon, the police arrived.

During negotiations, Valerozo tied Montillano to the grills of a window of her living room on the second floor of her house.


ERIK ARAZAS

A POLICEMAN stands outside the house where Bobby Valerozo reportedly took hostage his sister-in-law Juvy Montillano.

Valerozo, who was reportedly mentally ill, talked with the negotiators through a small window in the victim's bedroom, said Muntinlupa police chief Supt. Roberto Rongavilla.

"He gave no demands. He just vented his personal and family problems," Rongavilla told reporters.

Break

He also said Valerozo asked for a 30-minute break to think about his next action.

"So we gave him a break. We also discussed how we could pacify the hostage taker," he related.

However, even before Valerozo's requested break was over, a gunshot rang out.

"We suddenly saw blood dripping from the window," he said.

A gun battle ensued after the first shot was fired, said the city police chief.

"We were forced to make our final assault," he added.

PO2 Ivy de Guzman, a member of the special weapons and tactics team, suffered a gunshot wound in her left hand.

At 4:25 p.m., the compound fell silent.

When police entered the victim's house, they found Valerozo dead on a bed.

"It looked like he shot himself," Rongavilla added.

Shot in throat

Police said he shot himself in the throat.

Shock and fear gripped neighbors, saying they had not expected that such a tragedy could happen in their community.

"She (Juvy) was a good friend. She was happy with her family," said Ernesto Sapico, a close friend of the victim.

Cops-to-be flunk test

A SINGLE careless act dashed their dreams of becoming policemen.

The Western Police District arrested two students of the Philippine College of Criminology for robbing a cook early yesterday morning in Manila.

The suspects were identified as Wilbert Inbentor and Guien Cayanan, both from Tondo, Manila. An unidentified accomplice of the suspects was able to escape, police said.

According to initial reports, Romeo Bactul, a Chowking fast food employee, was walking along Matapang Street in Quiapo around 12:30 a.m. when the suspects announced the hold-up. The suspects were able to get Bactul's cell phone, ATM card and P150 in cash, police said. *Margaux C. Ortiz*

MMDA to continue two traffic schemes

By Tarra V. Quismundo

LACKING official notice, the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) will continue implementing two traffic schemes earlier declared illegal by the Makati court.

The ruling has been appealed by the MMDA.

"There has been no change so far. Unless there is an order from the chairman (MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando), we would continue implementing it," said Angelito Vergel de Dios, MMDA Traffic Operations Center executive director.

Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 145 Judge Cesar Santamaria recently denied the agency's appeal for the court to overturn its ruling that declared the Metropolitan Traffic Ticket scheme illegal and the No-Contact Traffic Apprehension scheme unconstitutional.

The resolution upheld an earlier court decision that barred the agency from implementing the two schemes.

MMDA Legal Services Chief Emmanuel de Castro said yesterday the agency was still waiting for a copy of the resolution dated July 4 and released late last week.

"Once we receive a copy, it would be between me and the OSG (Office of the Solicitor General). We will look at whatever available remedy," said De Castro, referring to the OSG which acted as the MMDA's legal counsel.

2 aliens found dead in Pasay

By Jocelyn R. Uy

A GERMAN and another Caucasian-looking man were found dead from gunshot wounds in Pasay City.

The German, Gerar Heningsen, 59, was found lifeless in an open space at 749 Leveriza corner Fresno Street at 11:30 p.m. Monday.

Barangay watchman William Balonso was on patrol when he saw Heningsen resting on an iron garden chair, said SPO3 Danny Unico.

Balonso was about to wake the foreigner when he realized that he was already dead.

Heningsen was wearing a white shirt and brown pants when found.

During investigation, police found a lone gunshot wound on the victim's left chest.

An empty shell from a .45-cal. pistol was found 10 feet from the body.

The German's partner, Michelle Legazpi, told police that Heningsen had been drinking before he was found dead about 50 meters from the condominium where the two were staying.

According to Legazpi, the victim previously had a disagreement with a barangay watchman.

Police are looking into the allegations.

Meanwhile, another body was found before dawn yesterday in a grassy area of the Diosdado Macapagal Boulevard.

A police report said the victim, who is believed to be a Caucasian and about 25 to 30 years old, was discovered by security guards at a property of the Public Estates Authority at about 5:30 a.m.

The victim, who was in jogging attire, bore a lone gunshot wound in the head, police said.

Police turned over the bodies to the Rizal Funeral Homes.

Fearing negative reactions from investors, Pasay City Mayor Wenceslao Trinidad said the killings were isolated incidents.

"There are no roving killers in Pasay City," he said.

Trinidad said he had directed the police to increase its visibility in the city by deploying more mobile patrol teams, especially in areas frequented by foreigners.

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Stray dogs could be spared from death, say pet lovers

By Tina G. Santos

ANIMAL welfare advocates yesterday urged the Manila government to enforce measures that could prevent the overpopulation problem posed by captured stray animals in the city.

Anna Cabrera, director of the Philippine Animal Welfare Society (PAWS), said one preventive measure the city government could implement is the use of the spay-neuter program.

Control

"This method would help control the animal population, instead of killing stray animals," said Cabrera.

"We can help them do it in coordination with our group," she added.

The Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) on Monday revoked the permit it earlier granted to the Manila City Pound for the electrocution of unclaimed stray dogs.

Experiment

The electrocution was part of an experiment to find a less expensive way than the usual method of lethal injection, according to Dr. Manuel Socorro of the city's Veterinary Inspection Bureau (VIB).

Permit canceled

PAWS, which was among those who protested the "horrible" method being considered by the city government to get rid of stray dogs, said no explanation was given for the cancellation of the permit.

"But the petition made by Nita Hontiveros-Lichauco, PAWS president, to revoke the said permit was immediately approved by the BAI's Committee on Animal Welfare (CAW)," Cabrera said.

She added that months ago, Lichauco lost to the majority of CAW members who voted to give Manila the license to electrocute dogs.

Outrage

"Public outrage at the electrocution of about 100 dogs in Manila may have had something to do with the immediate revocation of the permit," Cabrera said.

PAWS volunteer Emil Rebaño, who witnessed the electrocutions, said the dogs were pinned in varying positions by a steel metal roof and were electrocuted with 300 volts for three seconds.

Second try

But the dogs survived, and were visibly in pain. A second electrocution followed, with most of the dogs dead on the second try.

"We will continue to monitor the Manila City Pound and assure the public that the dogs are not killed in a manner that is inhumane and cruel," Cabrera said.

Never again

Ramona Consunji, another PAWS director, said the majority of CAW members have now decided never to grant a permit for electrocution, whether as an experiment or as a solution to control the overpopulation problem.

Manila Mayor Lito Atienza had informed PAWS through his son, former councilor Kim Atienza, that they would use lethal injection instead, Consunji added.

Mandaluyong closes road for construction of park

THE MANDALUYONG City government has announced that, beginning tomorrow, a portion of Coronado Extension in Barangay Hulo will be closed to give way to the construction of the Hulo Linear Park along the Pasig River.

In a faxed notice, the Mandaluyong Public Information Office said to be closed is the portion from the corner of F. Blumentritt to the corner of Ilino Cruz.

It is expected to be opened again on Aug. 27, 2005.

All vehicles from Makati bound for J.P. Rizal in Barangay Vergara and Namayan are advised to take F. Blumentritt, left to Ilino Cruz and back to J.P. Rizal. For light vehicles from Lambingan Bridge, turn right to Castañeda Street, right to Roxas Street and left to J.P. Rizal.

The Linear Park is part of the urban renewal program of the city government under Mayor Neptali M. Gonzales II and the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission.

The park is just among the many linear parks planned to rehabilitate the city's riverbanks.

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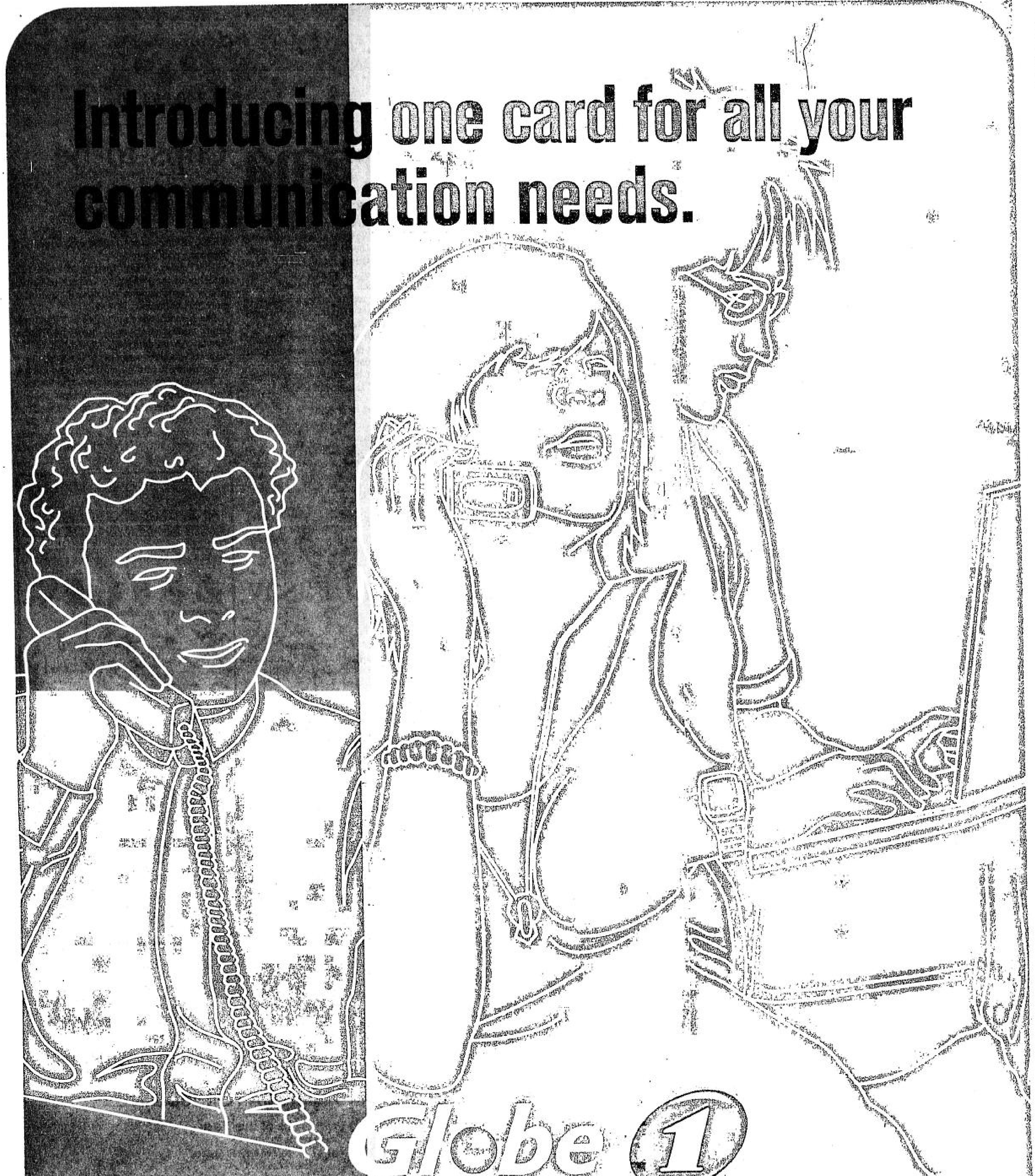

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Asians are better shuttlers, says mixed doubles star

By Marc Anthony Reyes

EVEN one of Team Europe's brightest stars admits, the Asians have the edge.

Gail Emms, the other half of the world's top-ranked mixed doubles pair, yesterday said the odds are slightly tilted against the Europeans in the MVP Cup Asia vs Europe badminton challenge at the PhilSports Arena.

Emms, a blonde 27-year-old smasher from Hitchin, Britain, acknowledged the fact that Asians—bannered by Olympic champion Taufik Hidayat of Indonesia and world singles No. 1 Lin Dan of China—are "very, very skillful" and play at a level that is "higher than the Europeans."

She said Team Asia is far quicker, while her European teammates "rely more on tactics and play a little bit different and unusual."

"I think it will be a very, very good match, and with a little bit of luck, Europe will prevail," said Emms, who will play side by side with Nathan Robertson, her partner of four years and with whom she had won the prestigious All England and Swiss Open titles. They also bagged the silver medal in the Athens Olympics.

Emms marveled at the way the Filipinos embrace badminton and promised to give a good match when they play homegrown bets Kennie and Kennievic Asuncion tomorrow.

"Kennie and Kennievic, they are lovely, lovely people," she said. "They are improving all the time. We beat them the first time, and hopefully this time we'll win again. But I hope it will be a good match so the crowd will enjoy it," she said.

BRITAIN'S top-ranked pair of Gail Emms and Nathan Robertson in action

WORLD No. 1 Zhang Ning attacks a lob shot by Mia Audina. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Zhang zaps Audina in Cup kickoff

By Marc Anthony Reyes

CHINA'S Olympic champion Zhang Ning displayed sharpness from all corners of the court to whip Dutch arch rival Mia Audina Tjiptawan, 11-5, 11-3, in the first women's singles as Team Asia drew first blood in the MVP Cup-Asia vs Europe badminton challenge at the PhilSports Arena.

The 26-year-old Zhang flicked delicate drop shots and whacked well-placed smashes with impunity, including one at matchpoint which landed squarely on Audina's chest.

"I had an easy time," said the 26-year-old Zhang of the victory, her eighth in 14 head-to-head duels with the naturalized Dutch woman whom she last defeated in the Athens Olympics gold-medal match.

"I think I had a better game in Athens," said Audina, who was bothered by the venue's air-conditioning louvers which she claimed blew the shuttlecock everywhere.

It could be a factor, but Zhang clearly got Audina's number from the first set when the world's third-ranked player capitalized on the former Indonesian's five unforced errors and zoomed to an 8-1 lead.

Zhang's repertoire of shots delighted the capacity crowd.

And when Audina scored successively off Zhang's miscalculations at the net to close in at 5-8, Zhang went back to business with a pair of deftly placed drop shots.

Audina, whose most sensational win over Zhang was in the 1994 Uber Cup finals, said of her game: "I played well tonight, but she just made some good shots out there."

GAMES TODAY
(*PhilSports Arena*)
7 p.m.—2nd men's singles: B. Jopplen vs Lin Dan
8:30 p.m.—2nd women's singles Pi Hongyan vs Seo Y.H.
10 p.m.—Ladies doubles: M. Audina-Yao Jie vs S. Thungthongkam-S. Chankrachangwong

Young Stags seek 2nd straight win vs Lions

STANDINGS	W	L
Letran	4	0
PCU	4	0
Mapua	4	0
Benilde	3	1
SSC	1	3
Perpetual	0	4
JRU	0	4
San Beda	0	4

GAMES TODAY
(*Cuneta Astrodome*)
11:30 a.m.—San Beda vs SSC (Jrs)
2 p.m.—San Beda vs SSC (Srs)
4 p.m.—Perpetual vs JRU (Srs)
6 p.m.—Perpetual vs JRU (Jrs)

SAN Sebastian coach Turo Valenzona expects the young Stags to step up this time when they battle the San Beda Lions at 2 p.m. in the NCAA basketball tournament at the Cuneta Astrodome.

"I only have a few veterans, and our new players haven't been coping with the system," said Valenzona after the Stags halted their three-game skid against the St. Benilde Blazers, 67-63, last Friday. "It's our worst start, but hopefully, we'll continue to do better in our future games."

Victory has also been elusive for the University of Perpetual Help Altas and the Jose Rizal U Bombers. But the two teams now have a chance to end their four-game losing spell when they collide at 4 p.m.

With Fritz Bauzon and Khiel Misa hitting clutch three-pointers, nearly rallied the Altas to their win last Monday but the Mapua Cardinals thwarted them with excellent defense in a 67-62 decision.

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SPORTSWATCH

Bobby Pacquiao GAB Boxer of the Month

BOBBY Pacquiao has been chosen by the Games and Amusements Board as its Boxer of the Month for June. GAB boxing division chief Emmanuel Flores yesterday said that Pacquiao's selection was anchored on his victory over Carlos Navarro for the WBC Continental Americas super-featherweight title on June 17 in the United States. Pacquiao knocked out Navarro in the seventh of their scheduled 12-rounder in Friant, California. California-based Michael Koncz, who together with Manny Pacquiao represents Bobby, said that the win will open the floodgate of lucrative offers for Bobby. "We are negotiating with Tom Loeffler for Bobby to fight on Sept. 24 on the undercard of heavyweight champ Vitali Klitschko," said Koncz. *Salven L. Lagumbay*

Big Event derby set at Pasay Cockpit

CHAMPIONS in recent GCAP and NCA derbies battle for supremacy in the "330 K Big Event 6–Cock Derby" on Friday at the Pasay City Cockpit with Sagupaan Complexor 3000 as sponsor. Participants include Big Event I and II champions Dicky Lim and RQP San Juan, Big Event II co-champion Pol Estrellado, 2005 World Slasher champ Matt Bitanga, Rudy Albano, Boy de Roca, Gov. Chavit Singson, Manny Pacquiao and Boy Royo. Ready to challenge them is the tandem of Patrick Antonio and Jun Topacio of Cavite, who topped the NCA Super Special 6–Cock Derby last month. Also fielding their entries are former ambassador Danding Cojuangco, Gov. Ito Ynares, NCA secretary general Jun Santiago, 2005 World Slasher Cup runner-up Rey Briones, Benjie Lim, Tony Lasala, and Rep. J. Paras.

Roligon Hatawan finals slate 200 fights

TOP-RATED provincial cockers are in for a long and fierce battle today in Roligon Mega Cockpit's Hatawan Sa Tag-Ulan 6-Cock Derby" championship round beginning at 9 a.m. The 200–fight program will be sponsored by Lakpue Drug Inc. and Thunderbird Power Feeds. From a field of 306 entries, 54 tallied two wins each, while 24 new participants will field all six cocks today. The pacesetters include Danny Pe (Yam Cha), Biboy Enriquez (Tanay), Rep. Rolando Andaya (St. Michael II), Felix Reliza (FCR Macatad), Rey Briones (Gold Spartans), Noriaki Morita of Japan (Kumichu), Erwin Siaco (RJ 2005), Jeric Junio (Jeric and Joeben), Wewe Burgos (Calmer V), Dong Lacson (DPG Guimbal), Arnold Mendoza (Grey Creek Mt. Panamao), Leo Mojeno (Norman), Rey Soberano (Jima 616) and Ayong Lorenzo (EDL Excellence). Call 851-2275, 833-1638 and 852-9812 for details.

Habol sa Taglugon 4-Cocker Aug. 11

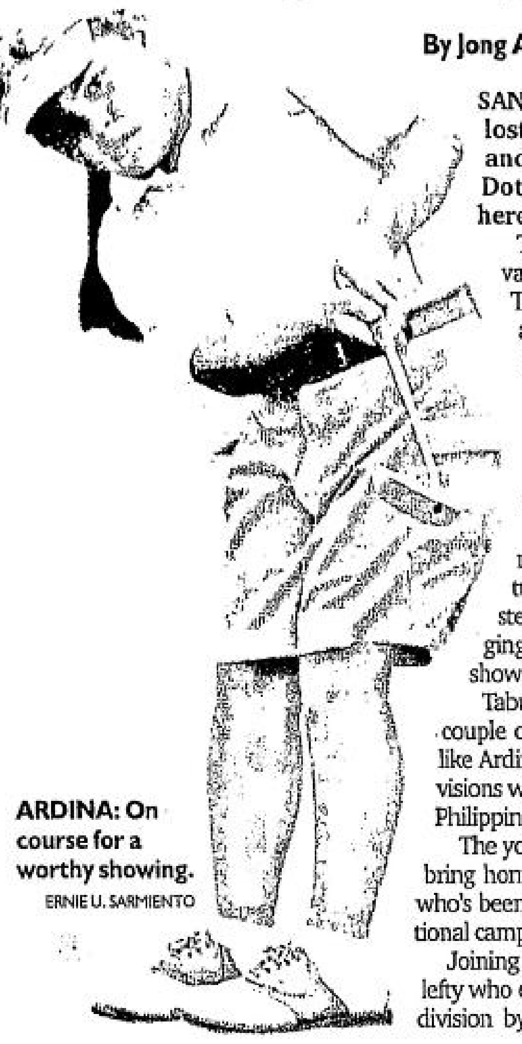
THE BIRTHDAY Gift Habol sa Taglugon 4-Cocker will be held at the Biñan Coliseum on Aug. 11. Hosted by Golden Circle and Toto Papag, the derby sponsored by Thunderbird Multi-Grain Concentrate and Thunderbird Multi-Grain Conditioner stakes P1 million for an entry fee of P33,000. Meanwhile, Grower Maintenance Pellets was successfully launched in Misamis Oriental during the Special 5-Cock Derby held at the Cagayan Sports Arena last week.

RACING

AT SANTA ANA BY MR. 999

Race 1—1. Kiss Me Quick 2. Shy Girl 3. Ocean Magic
Race 2—1. Carte Blanche 2. Wing Away 3. El Cid 4. Empire State 5. American Beauty
Race 3—1. Cat Prince 2. Sweet Talk 3. Ocean Cookie/Risk Taker 4. Pay to See
Race 4—1. Blue Iris 2. Pasirit 3. Kalashnikov 4. Rindo Maker
Race 5—1. Don Exequiel 2. Speed Bullet 3. Rosebud/Candu 4. Red Strike 5. Sincerity
Race 6—1. Fantasia 2. Swallow Ur Pride 3. Fastteller 4. Manileño
Race 7—1. Quick Pick 2. Blue Bolero 3. Precious Moment 4. Something Silver 5. Daddy's Girl
Race 8—1. My Lady Hannah 2. Inner Wheeler 3. Parrot Moe 4. Honoree 5. Top Quest 6. Andee's Whisper

Pinoys open Jr World bid



ARDINA: On course for a worthy showing.
ERNIE U. SARMIENTO

By Jong Arcano

SAN DIEGO—At first glance, they look lost in a competition among big boys and girls of various nationalities. But Dottie Ardina and Miguel Tabuena came here to play golf. Make that good golf.

Though giving up a lot in height to their rivals, the credentials of both Ardina and Tabuena are just too impressive not to merit a second look. The pair spearheads the 48-strong Philippine challenge in the Callaway Junior World championships which tees off Tuesday (Wednesday in Manila) in various courses here.

The RP contingent here is the biggest since 1970.

Ardina, already a champion and a runner-up in her last three appearances here, returns to play in a third division. With her steady play, the Canlubang lass with the wagging pony-tail is on course for another worthy showing.

Tabuena, on the other hand, comes in with a couple of international victories under his belt and, like Ardina, backstops Filipino hopes in the lower divisions where there's a big expectation of yet another Philippine victory.

The young Tabuena is also on a special mission "to bring home something big" for an ailing grandfather who's been a great source of inspiration in his international campaigns.

Joining Tabuena in his division is JR Gonzales, the lefty who ended a 15-year RP title drought in the boys' division by topping the 7-8 years category last year. They will be playing the hazard-laden Lawrence Welk Resort course in Escondido.

The organizers' decision to transfer Class F play from the pitch-and-putt Presidio Hills course to Colina Park, near the famous San Diego Zoo puts the 6-under bets of the team supported by Philippine Airlines, Samsung, Manila Southwoods in a good position to deliver.

Standouts like Abby Arevalo, Janella Buen and even 5-year-old Ryan Monsalve, the youngest member of the delegation, trained in regular courses back home and delegation head Raoul Lachica believes this could give them some advantage.

"I think that with a little luck, we can bring home another champion's trophy," said Lachica, president of the Junior Golf Foundation of the Philippines.

Noted swing coach Bong Lopez, who has been helping some of the kids prepare for their Junior World stints, said that while the lower-division entries are poised for strong showings, a victory in either Class A or Class B is possible.

Lopez said the four boys in Class A—Tonton Asistio, Matthew Manotoc, Miko Yee and Mico Alejandro—have been exposed to tough local and international events and the Junior World could just be their time to shine.

Carito Villaroman's victory in Class A in 1986 proved to be RP's last in that division.

The Philippine entries:

Class A—T. Asistio, M. Yee, M. Manotoc, M. Alejandro, B. dela Paz, L. de Villa, K. Uy; **Class B**—J. Abdon, C. Mamaril, N. Monsalve, L. Celestino, R. Medestomas, C. Superal, R. de Guzman, C. Rodriguez, D. de Villa, B. Mendoza, M. Picolo; **Class C**—W. Superal, M. Superal,R. Fueg, E. Kishida, D. Ardina, M. Legaspi, K. dela Cruz, A. de Villa; **Class D**: M. Tabuena, JR Gonzales, B. dela Paz, JP de Claro, LJ Go, A. Unson, I. Gabasa, F. Medalla; **Class E**: JR Ramos, M. Arevalo, M. Yee, R. Tolentino, J. Dy, P. Superal; **Class F**—R. Monsalve, Z. Nieves, M. Robles, A. Arevalo, LK Go, C. Legaspi, J. Buen

Ozamiz raps Mantawi, grabs solo lead

OZAMIZ CITY—Host Ozamiz Cotta seized solo leadership in the Southern Conference Monday by beating Hapee/Dewfoam-backed Mantawi, 91-78, in the 2005 Panasonic-NBC national basketball championship at the Gov. Angel Medina Sr. gym here.

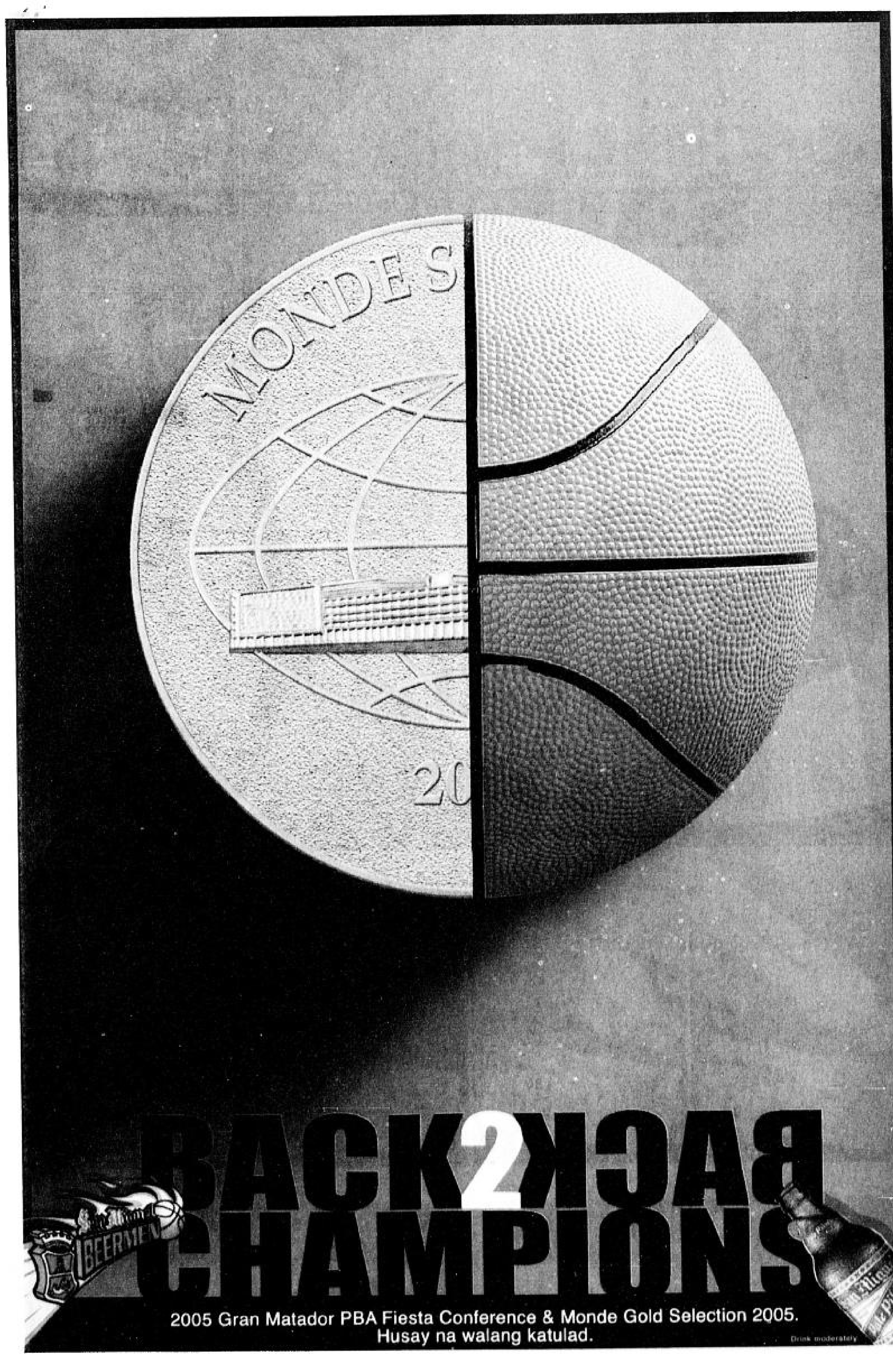
Except for slotman Christian Nicdao, who played limited minutes due to a high fever, all the Ozamiz cagers of Mayor Reynaldo Parojinog performed well against erstwhile leader Mantawi in the highly physical match which was marred by three technical fouls and the expulsion of Ozamiz forward Rulof Liangco.

Mario Basco came off the bench for Liangco in the third period and helped Ozamiz open a 64-52 lead, which Ozamiz kept till the end.

Ardy Larong and Christopher Carretas mounted a rally for the Sparkling Nights, who muffed 24 of 44 free throws, but the closest Mantawi could come to was at 64-75. Ozamiz then dropped a 14-5 bomb to post its biggest lead, 86-70, with 3:30 left.

It was the seventh win in nine games for Ozamiz.

Mantawi, which is also backed by Mayor Teddy Ouano, dropped to third at 4-2, behind defending champion Tribu Sugbu (6-2).



RP pool must catch the bus

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

RP POOL in the Kaoshiung City world championship was a kid who has missed the school bus on a rainy morning.

That poor kid was Marlon Manalo. Definitely not the old Bata Reyes, who got booted out early in the qualifiers, not fumbling Django Bustamante, blasted out cold in the first round of the Final 64.

Manalo went home with $20,000, biggest loot of his career.

The lone star left in the powerhouse RP team, Manalo made it to the semifinals of the world pool series.

That's an improvement, a personal high after he had been stopped cold by Marcus Chamat in the quarterfinals last year.

Great. But Manalo has more reasons to feel and look disappointed.

***

Marvelous Marlon's stint in the 2005 world pool series will be celebrated and used to continue marketing the game of pool hereabouts.

Truth is he was not a complete representative of the skilled, superb, well-informed Filipino cue artist, once typified by the younger Bata Reyes, who's both respected and feared in international circuits.

Of course, Manalo, pride of Mandaluyong City, was both sharp and sensational, even unforgiving, when he scored a record back-to-back shutouts of two Taiwanese bets en route to a showdown with Finland's Mika Immonen, the 2001 world champ.

After squealing past Immonen in an uneven feat that had his home fans agonizing, Manalo arrived at the semis showdown with 16-year-old Wu Chia-ching, youngest in the field.

With his vast experience, Manalo was pegged the heavy favorite.

***

Sorry. Manalo lost his biggest match in the world championship.

Correction: He did not only lose, he was humbled by Wu, who went on to take the title with a progressive game, thereby introducing a stronger brand of play in world pool.

The foreign commentators actually called it the Murder of Marvelous Marvin Manalo.

But we can't blame those who insist that Manalo had lost that big one on breaks, that his youthful foe was extremely lucky.

There were indeed some crucial breaks that went the way of Wu, like that missed seven-ball careening to the other end and falling into the right corner pocket.

It would however be terribly unfair to conclude that Wu won it mainly on luck.

Wu won because he played a superior steady game.

***

How and why did Manalo wilt while his usually well-rounded game started to go wild?

Manalo had to make several uncharacteristic shots that suddenly bared poor capacity at problem solving.

An atrocious shot at the two-ball, with a thin line to the side corner, but which clashed crazy with the three-ball, readily sent the commentators asking what was the matter.

Then, when Manalo opted for a nervous defensive placement on the sinkable one-ball lying close to the side rail, the game analysts failed to conceal their disgust.

"He's the architect of his own doom," said the foreign voice over ESPN.

The commentator, who had picked Manalo to trip Wu, did try to put a tamer twist to the critical comment but was simply aghast at Manalo's uncharacteristic fold-up.

***

Anyway, that thing about Marlon being left behind by the school bus was no mere figure of speech.

Manalo did appear every inch like a cold, lost kid in his chair as Wu proceeded to connect with his solid two-fisted offensive.

Anyway, one great thing about Manalo is that, unlike those who will continue cashing in on the game of pool here, the political science graduate did not try to conceal his disappointment.

Maybe it was Manalo's way of saying something must be done to the game of pool in the Philippines.

You know, like putting up a national pool development program in place.

For one, it's no secret how Chinese-Taipei has incorporated the game of pool into the high school curriculum.

However, Manalo & Co. will continue to miss the bus for as long as they can't differentiate the game of pool from selfish big business in the Philippines.

Cyclists ride into Alps

Mountains to reveal Tour de France contenders

GRENOBLE, France—For Lance Armstrong and his Tour de France challengers, the iron test begins now—in the thin air of the Alps, on snaking climbs lined by screaming fans.

"The mountains put everyone back in their place," Armstrong's team manager, Johan Bruyneel, said Monday as the 175 riders left after week one of the three-week race enjoyed their first rest day.

"I can't wait to see what will happen."

Only by keeping rivals at bay on the relentlessly long and steep ascents can Armstrong retire at the finish in Paris on July 24 with a seventh consecutive victory. And only by taking the fight to the six-time champion can his challengers hope to break his record streak.

Armstrong heads into Tuesday's first Alpine stage from Grenoble to the ski station of Courchevel with a sizable but not invincible lead over his main rivals—Jan Ullrich, Alexandre Vinokourov and Andreas Kloeden of the T-Mobile squad, and Italian Ivan Basso of Team CSC.

"Lance is sitting pretty and licking his lips," said Basso's American teammate, Bobby Julich.

To win, rivals must put Armstrong and his Discovery Channel squad under pressure by riding hard in the Alps and in the Pyrenees, which follow at the end of the week. Waiting for the American to collapse is unlikely to be a winning formula. *AP*

Bad boy Artest: I'll change for the kids

INDIANAPOLIS—NBA bad boy Ron Artest arrived at the Indiana Pacers' rookie-free agent camp on Monday pledging to be a smarter player focused on helping his team win a championship.

The star forward spoke to the local media for the first time since a November fight in Detroit resulted in a nearly season-long suspension. That night, Artest went into the stands at The Palace and attacked a Pistons fan after he was hit with a cup of beer.

Artest said he wants to cut down on technical fouls and remain in control to help his team. He called his tendency to draw technicals "playing against your team.

"As you get older, you get a bit more wise," he said.

"I'm a ghetto-type guy," he said. "I'll be ghetto for the rest of my life. But at the same time, there's a lot of kids who look up to me. For that, I'll change."

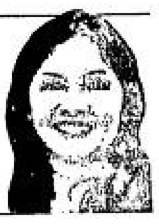
The former All-Star and NBA defensive player of the year was averaging 24.6 points and 6.4 rebounds per game in seven games when his season was cut short. *AP*

Badminton duo sets clinic

NATHAN Robertson and Gail Emms, 2004 European badminton champs in mixed doubles and Olympic silver medalists, will visit Sportshouse-SM Megamall at 3 p.m. today to interact with the fans and shoppers. The visit of the British duo, which was arranged by Mars Chua of Sportshouse and Cecile Reyes of Dunlop-Slazenger Group, is part of the activities leading to the Sportshouse-Carlton 2005 Corporate and Celebrity Cup slated July 18-24. It will feature around 20 teams and several show biz personalities playing for big prizes. Robertson and Emms shall also play exhibition matches, conduct badminton clinics, sign autographs and pose for souvenir photos later in the afternoon at the Atrium of SM Megamall near the Sportshouse outlet.

Two reasons why SMB won

IN HUDDLE



Beth Celis

FRANKLY, with Asi Taulava reactivated, I thought the Talk 'N Text Phone Pals would clinch the PBA Gran Matador Fiesta crown without much effort. After all, even without Asi, they managed to lead in the team standings from the eliminations to the semis.

The other day, when I called to congratulate and condole with friends from champion San Miguel Beer and runner-up Talk 'N Text, I did not hesitate to talk about this pre-series forecast which I had kept to myself.

As expected of true gentlemen, the victors were magnanimous, the losers humble.

* * *

"Talk 'N Text lost the championship but will rise again from this experience a better team. San Miguel Beer outclassed us. They deserve being called champs. In the meantime, I will take off for Subic this weekend and heal," said TNT governor Ricky Vargas in a text message. I did not hear his voice but even the aura of his message exuded deep gloom and depression.

I wanted to ask Ricky what went wrong, but I felt that he did not want to delve on the championship any further, so I ended the communication.

From the SMB camp, the "thank yous" were curt but cheerful. Asked to react to my prediction, External Relations manager Robert Non said preparation probably made the big difference for the Beermen.

"Maybe, *mas malalim* and extensive *ang* preparations *ni* Jong (Uichico) for the game. He was ready at any given time to make the necessary adjustments."

Jong, on the other hand, thinks it could have been a case of overconfidence.

"*Baka naman ho naging* overconfident *lang sila*," he said.

* * *

If only four national cagers can join the team that is supposed to play in Las Vegas to prepare for the Jones Cup in Taiwan on July 22, I don't see why we have to compete at all, since it's a big waste of money. Only four players will benefit from the international exposure.

The other nationals—Dondon Hontiveros, Dorian Peña, Danny Seigle, Nic Belasco, Willie Miller, Asi Taulava, Jimmy Alapag and Yancy de Ocampo—couldn't go because they were involved in a championship battle. Alternate Enrico Villanueva is recovering from a nose surgery.

The four RP cagers who will see action in Las Vegas are Tony de la Cruz, Kerby Raymundo, Jayjay Helterbrand and Romel Adducul, who will be beefed up by RenRen Ritualo, James Yap, Mike Cortez, Rich Alvarez, Kelly Williams, Sonny Thoss, Billy Mamaril and Don Allado.

If scouting is RP's purpose in this Global Hoops summit, then we can send a scout or two, not a 20-man delegation.

Really, I can't figure it out. Only the four players will proceed to the Jones Cup with the rest of the nationals, who will be flying to Taiwan from Manila. The rest of the Las Vegas group will be flying back to Manila.

It will be a head-swirling schedule for Chot Reyes and the four nationals who will arrive in Manila in the morning of July 23, after more than 14 hours of flight. That same day at noon, the group will fly to Taiwan where they are scheduled to play their first game at 8 p.m.

Oh well, maybe this is a commitment RP coach Reyes has to keep. Or it could be that the other players are being groomed for the November SEAG, assuming the Fiba ban on the Philippines is lifted by that time. And, assuming that the BAP, which continues to be recognized by the Fiba, does not field its own team.

* * *

HOOPVINE: Who will get the PBA television franchise for the next three years, ABC-5 or Solar Sports which will air the games over IBC-13? Some say the board is inclined to choose Solar which has submitted a higher bid; others believe ABC 5 will ultimately enjoy the equity of the incumbent. It's a tossup.

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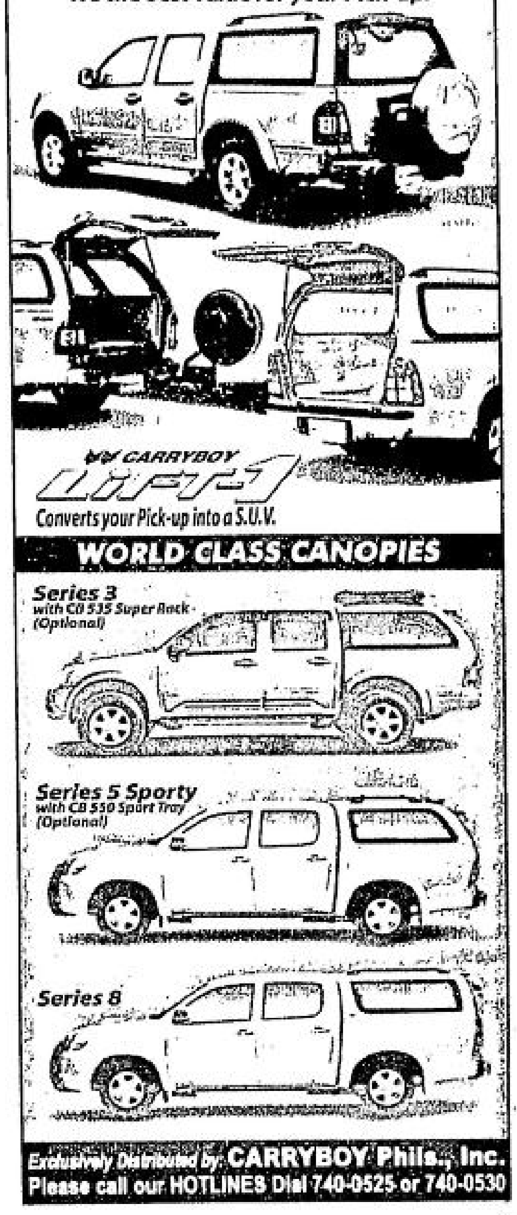

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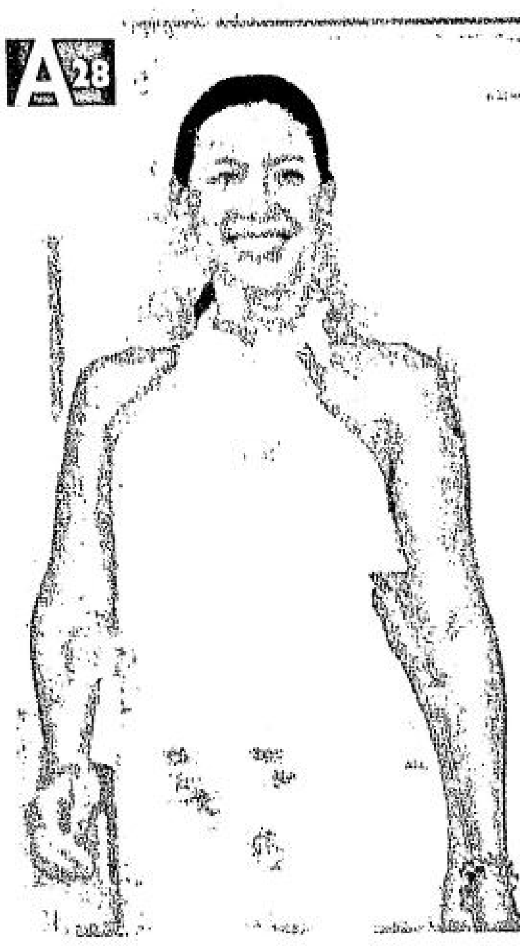
To the runway—and smile!


CHRISTINE Jacob-Sandejas

CHERIE Gil

"CLOSEUP TO FAME: The Search for the Next CloseUp Couple" finalists

CHESKA Garcia

SOME of the country's most glamorous stars took to the catwalk during the recent launch of a new line of whitening formula for women.

In the spotlight during the event at the Rockwell Tent was the Nivea Visage Multiple White range.

Hosted by TV personalities Chynna Ortaleza and Pinky Webb, the event was highlighted by an "Ode to White Beauty," a showcase of stunning all-white fashion by young women designers Reian Mata, Tippi Ocampo, Yvonne Quisumbing and Kate Torralba.

Nancy Castiliogne and Cherie Gil modeled Reian Mata's fashionable, colorful and funky, yet wearable clothes. Bianca King and Plinky Recto wore Tippi Ocampo's creations inspired by the iconic white shirt and its many incarnations.

For Bettina Carlos and Eula Valdez, it was Yvonne Quisumbing's collection of intricate beadwork and odd shapes wedded to traditional silhouettes. Cheska Garcia and Christine Jacob were picked to showcase Kate Torralba's flattering feminine shapes.

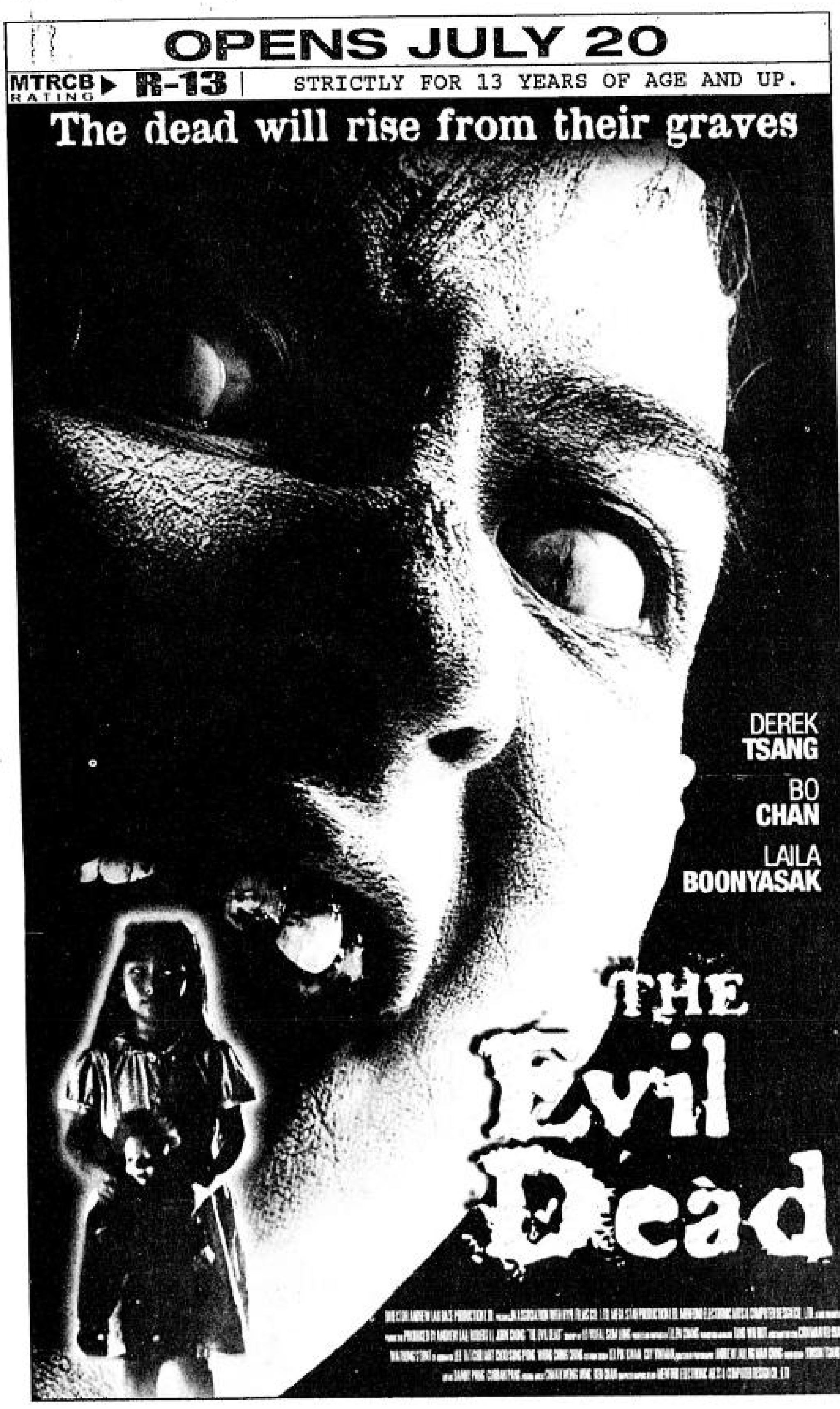
Spotted in the audience were Jomari Yllana and Raymond Gutierrez.

24 smiles

"CLOSEUP to Fame: The Search for the Next CloseUp Couple" was recently launched via a hip party at Club Embassy hosted by Drew Arellano, a mainstay of Studio 23's "Wazzup! Wazzup!" and Myx veejay/commercial model Iya Villania. Young heartthrob Geoff Eigenmann will host the reality talent search on TV along with actress and former CloseUp endorser Heart Evangelista.

The highlight of the evening was the introduction of 24 finalists: Carine, Kris, Gerica, Kenji, Lalaine, Alex, Val, OJ, Ann, Reyson, Eleine, Paolo, Teena, Bernard, Maan, Jayson, Lud, Gino, Zakaya, Billy, Abby, Jeric, Ruth and Rodel.

Over the next few weeks, a winning pair will emerge to become the toothpaste brand's next endorsers.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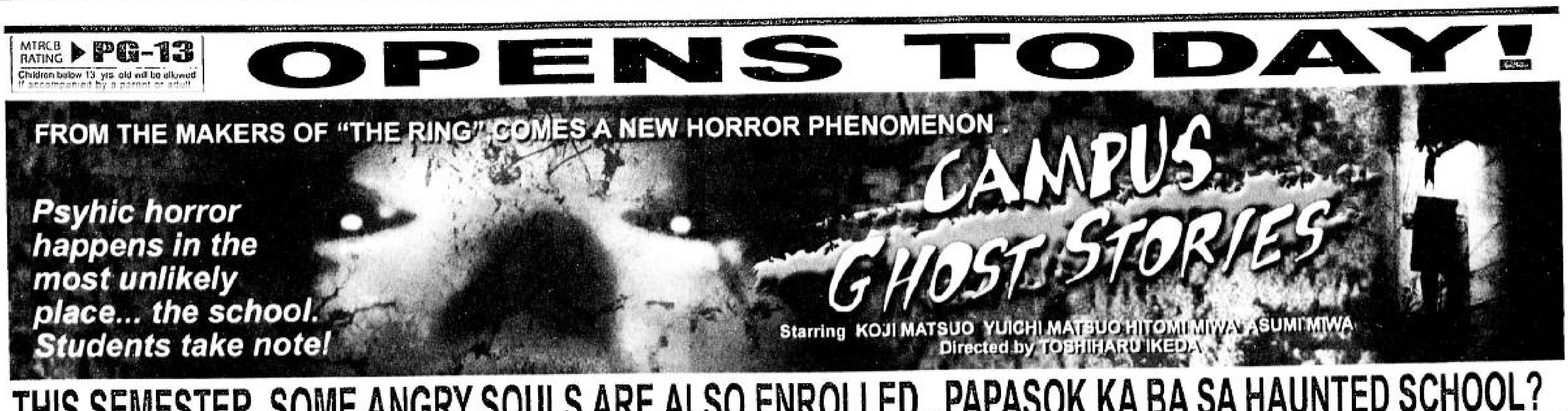
FROM THE MAKERS OF "THE RING" COMES A NEW HORROR PHENOMENON.
Psyhic horror happens in the most unlikely place... the school. Students take note!
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Directed by TOSHIHARU IKEDA
THIS SEMESTER, SOME ANGRY SOULS ARE ALSO ENROLLED...PAPASOK KA BA SA HAUNTED SCHOOL?

CHEER FACTOR

Do you want Austin Powers teeth?

NEW YORK—Dazzlingly white, perfectly aligned... and now with a touch of glamour: New York cosmetic dentists are offering smiles fit for a movie star.

Fans can now get a semi-permanent prosthesis known as "snap-in veneers." Made of resin, the veneers are placed over patients' teeth, allowing them to flash confident grins like those of their favorite actor or actress.

Whether the resultant smile is that of Cameron Diaz or of Britney Spears, the cosmetic lift can be put on and taken off in the blink of an eye... at $1,500-$1,800, says Dr. Marc Liechtung.

"It involves no drilling, no cement, no needles. It just involves taking an accurate impression," says Liechtung, who has fitted out more than 100 people. "If somebody wants to look like somebody, they like a certain smile, they show us the picture, and we can do it."

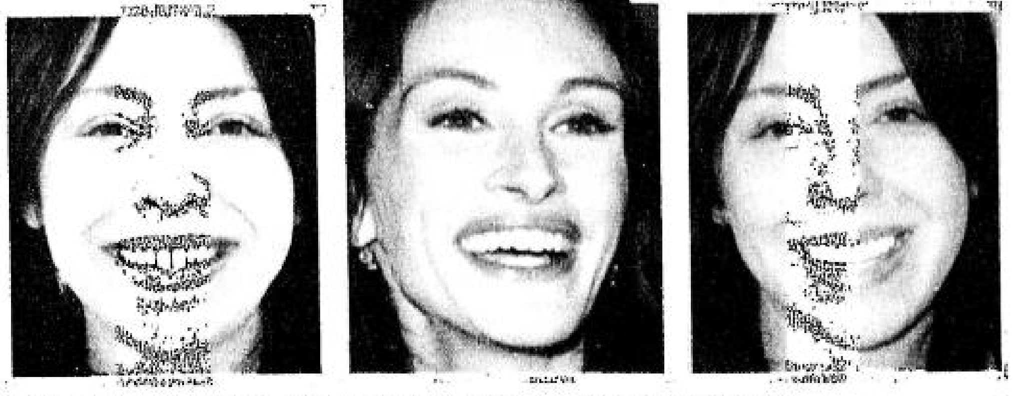
Asked if he can reproduce Julia Roberts' smile, the Manhattan dentist replies: "Yes, a hundred percent."

But this type of prosthesis has existed since the 1930s and was used in Hollywood, says dentist Jeff Golub-Evans, who works for Broadway and cinema but has recently extended his services beyond the theatrical crowd.

"When I started making them two years ago, I called them square teeth, round teeth, triangle teeth," says Golub-Evans. "People couldn't relate, people had no idea what that meant.

"Then I started calling them sexy teeth, sophisticated teeth, sporty teeth. But still they didn't know what that meant. That's when I hit upon the idea of making a 'Nicole' (Kidman), a 'Gwyneth' (Paltrow), a 'Julia' (Roberts), choosing the five favorite smiles that people would come in with pictures."

He also sells the "Halle" (Berry), the "George" (Clooney), and the "Mel" Gibson—all available in five sizes and five shades—but, he notes, the favorite is "Hollywood white." *AFP*



A JULIA Roberts (center) fan named Debbie before and after the snap-ins AFP

Pinoy TV's LA launch

...

From page A32

ble providers in the US, will distribute Pinoy TV on a per-subscription scheme. Pinoy TV is seen in Guam and Japan at the moment.

Pinoy TV will compete with The Filipino Channel (TFC), which broadcasts news and variety programs and other select shows from ABS-CBN, GMA 7's rival network.

"TFC created a high level of awareness for Filipino shows in the US. We give them credit for that," Francia said. "But the demand for ABS-CBN programs has reached the saturation point. People there are now asking for GMA 7 shows."

He added: "By saturation point, I mean TFC no longer has elbow room for growth. [Filipinos abroad] feel they are missing out [because] GMA 7 has the most popular programs in the Philippines now."

Francia said Filipinos in San Francisco would soon see GMA 7 via Comcast or a DTH (Direct-to-Home) platform.

The postponement is a temporary setback, he stressed. "We just deferred the actual staging to maximize audience attendance. Our order from the chairperson (Felipe L. Gozon) was to bring to the US the best 'SOP' show ever."

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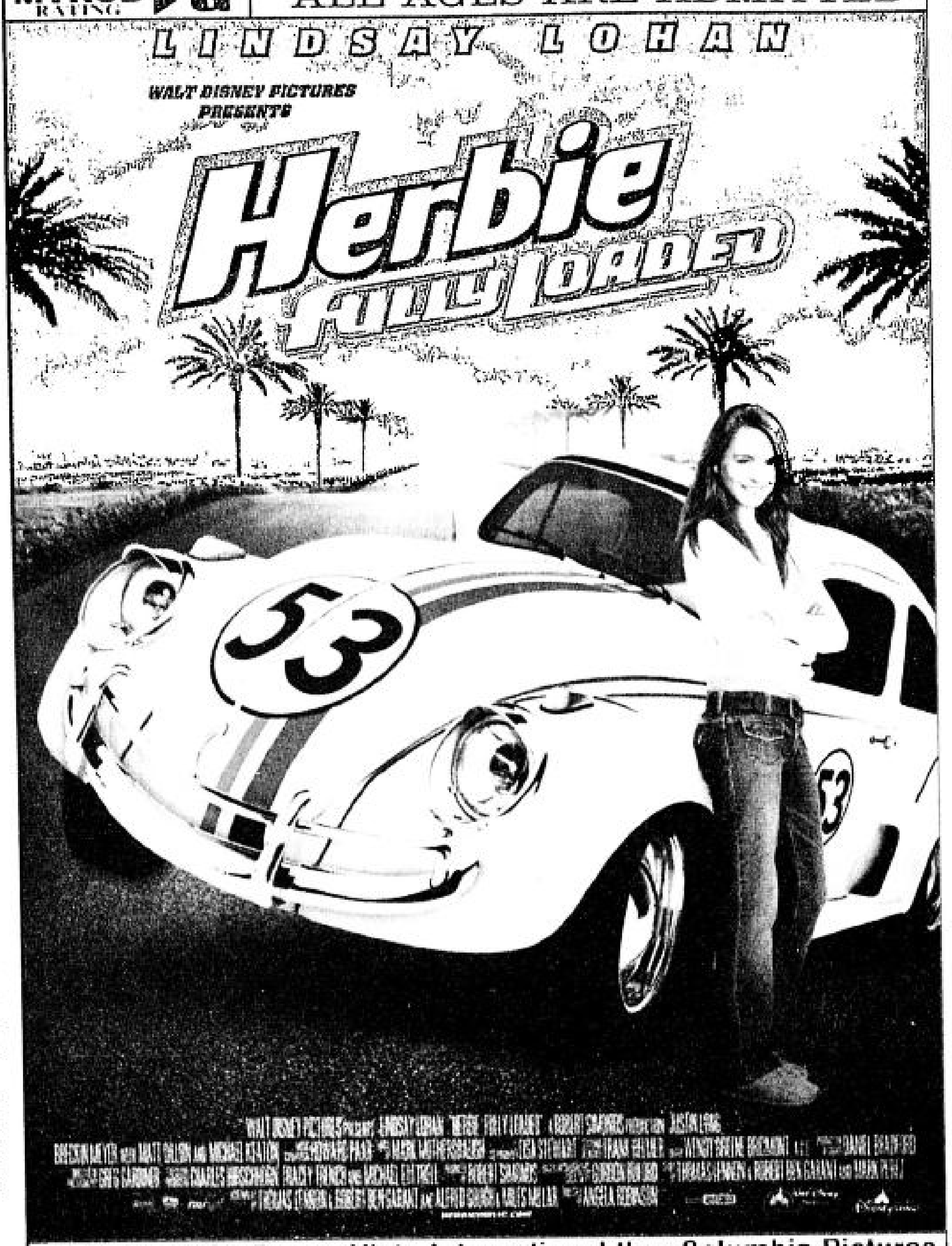
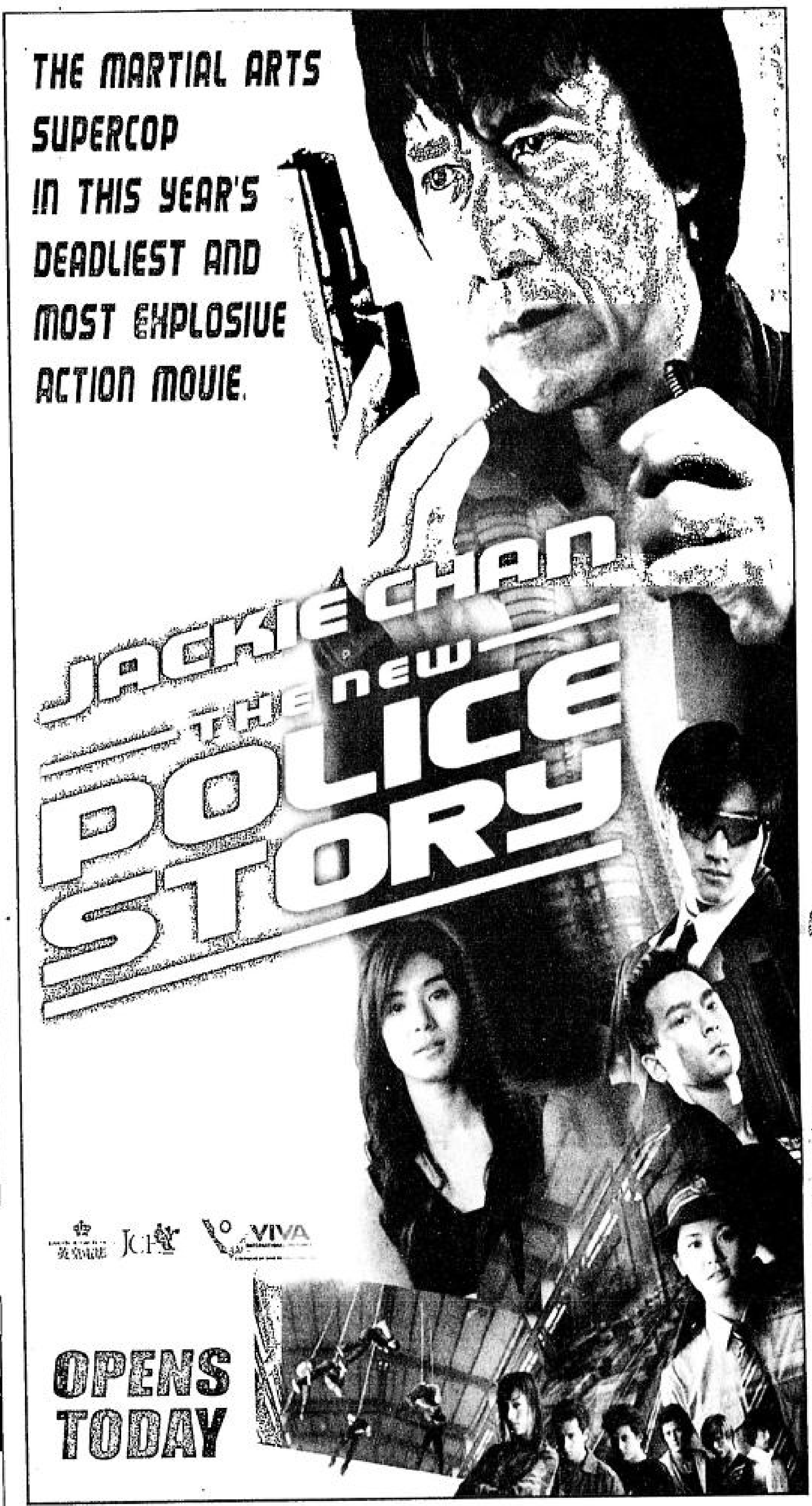


Distributed by Buena Vista International thru Columbia Pictures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JACKIE CHAN
THE new POLICE STORY
VIVA
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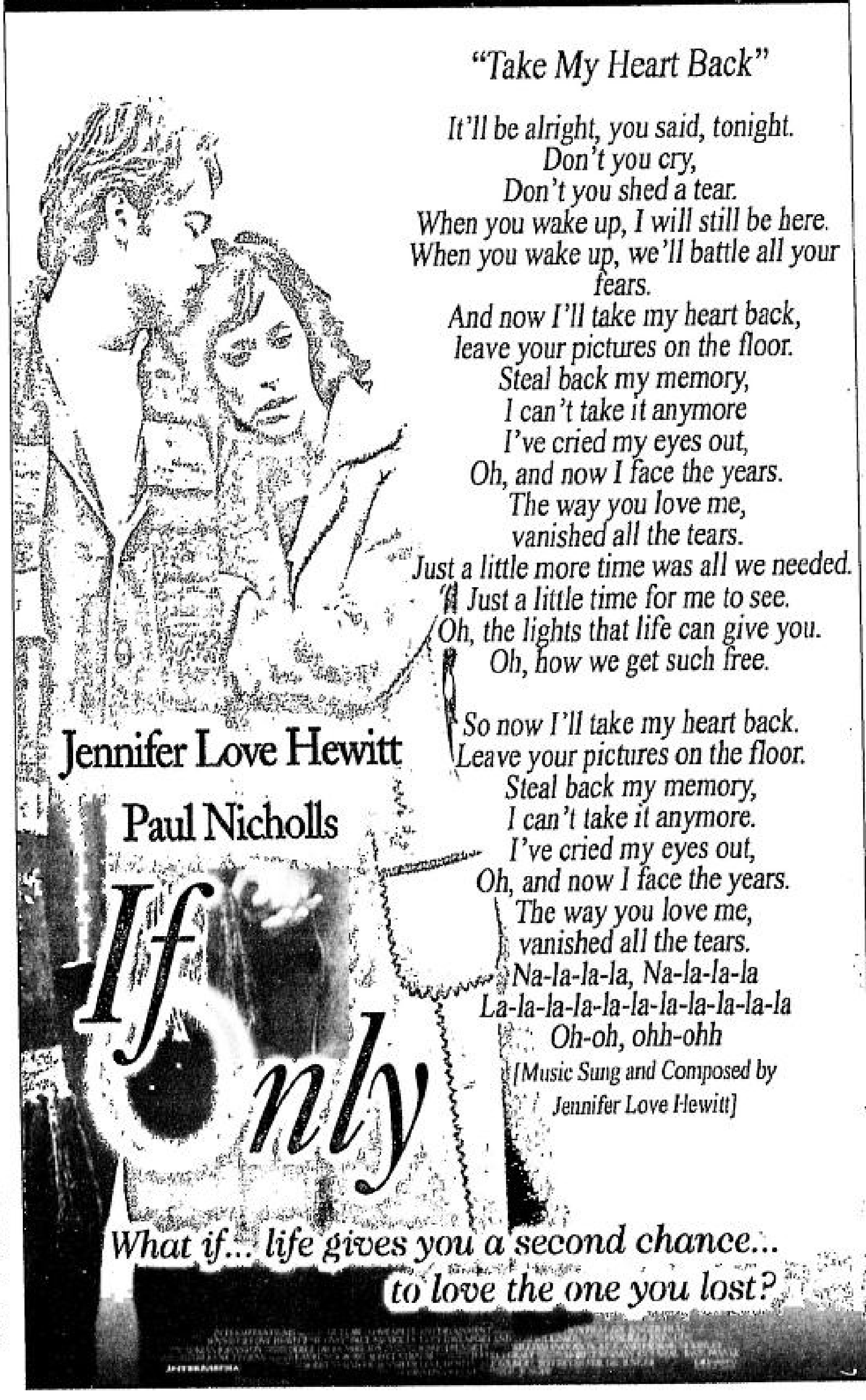
Jennifer Love Hewitt
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If Only
What if... life gives you a second chance... to love the one you lost?

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It'll be alright, you said, tonight.
Don't you cry,
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When you wake up, I will still be here.
When you wake up, we'll battle all your fears.
And now I'll take my heart back,
leave your pictures on the floor.
Steal back my memory,
I can't take it anymore
I've cried my eyes out,
Oh, and now I face the years.
The way you love me,
vanished all the tears.
Just a little more time was all we needed.
Just a little time for me to see.
Oh, the lights that life can give you.
Oh, how we get such free.

So now I'll take my heart back.
Leave your pictures on the floor.
Steal back my memory,
I can't take it anymore.
I've cried my eyes out,
Oh, and now I face the years.
The way you love me,
vanished all the tears.
Na-la-la-la, Na-la-la-la
La-la-la-la-la-la-la-la-la-la-la
Oh-oh, ohh-ohh
[Music Sung and Composed by
Jennifer Love Hewitt]

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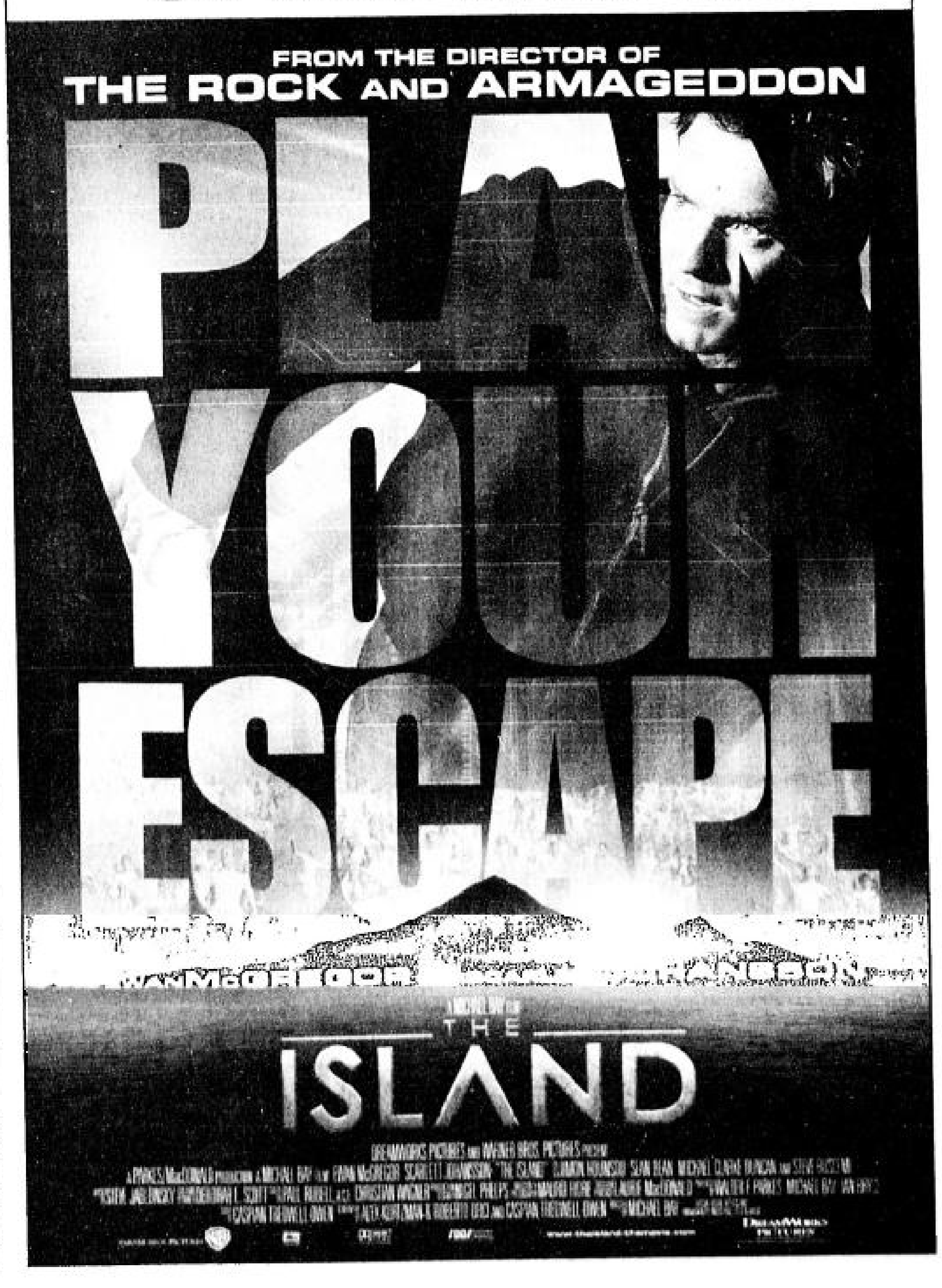
OPENS JULY 20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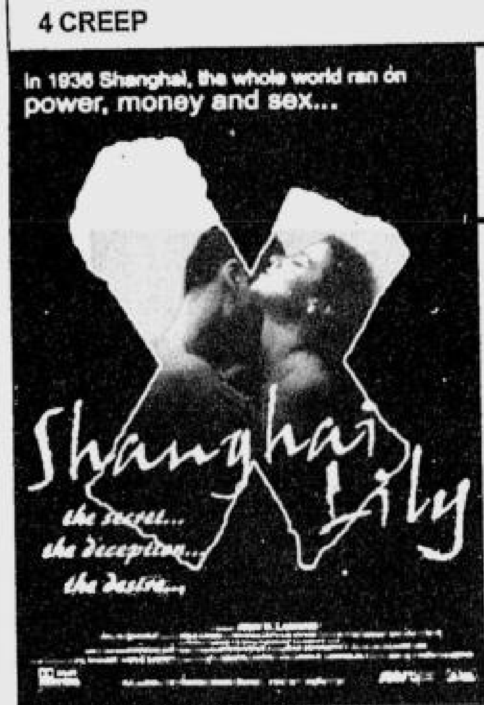
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July 28,2005

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GB1 GREENBELT 1	1 HERBIE FULLY LOADED	2 FANTASTIC 4					
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX HERBIE FULLY LOADED GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX FANTASTIC 4 GUARANTEED SEATS	3 WAR OF THE WORLDS GUARANTEED SEATS	4 FANTASTIC 4 GUARANTEED SEATS	5 IF ONLY GUARANTEED SEATS		
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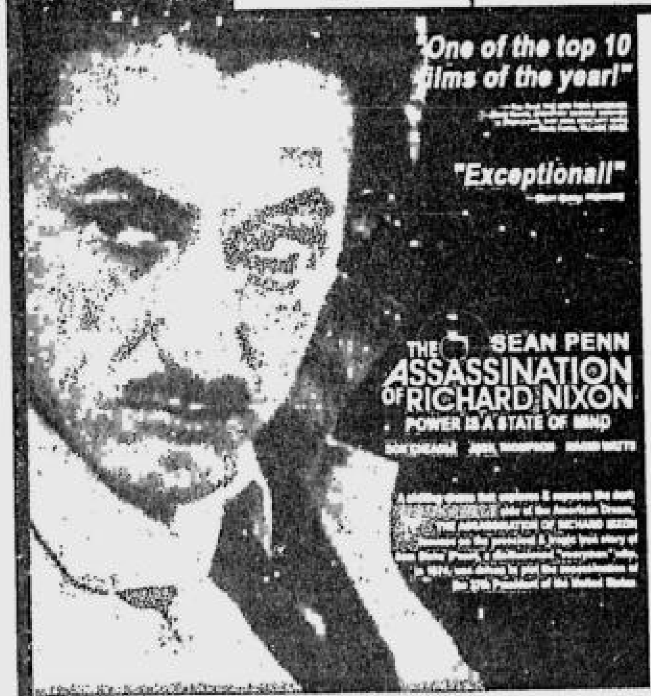
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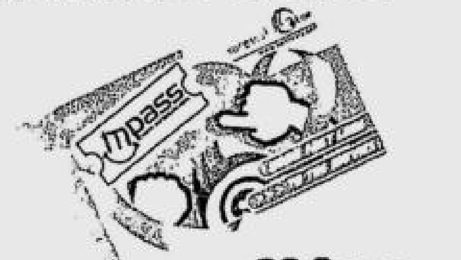

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Per DTI NCR Permit No. AI-420 Series of 2005.

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③ Fantastic 4
④ Batman Begins

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⑤ Monster-in-Law
⑥ War of the Worlds
⑦ Fantastic 4

EVENTS! EVENTS!

MARKET! MARKET!

Sale! Sale!

July 15 & 17
10am-10pm

July 16
10am-12mn

Sale! Sale!

Per DTI-NCR Permit No A2-352, Series of 2005

Artists vs piracy

SHOW TIME

A THREE-DAY event dubbed "OPM Crossroads: The 2005 Guitar Festival," set July 15 to 17 at Eastwood Citywalk, will feature top-rate solo entertainers, the hottest bands and the best acoustic guitar players in the business.

The event is the first in a series of concerts to be staged monthly by the Philippine Association of the Recording Industry and Artists Against Piracy till the end of the year.

Topbilled on Friday are RJ Jacinto, Johnny Alegre Affinity, Silverfilter, Pinikpikan, Color It Red, Tropical Depression, Pido with Take One, Juana, MYMP and Mishka Adams. Hosts are Joe D' Mango of Wave 89.1 and Robert Crespo of Crossover 105.1.

On Saturday, the headliners are Overtone, Wolfman, Sugarfree, Kitchie Nadal, Nyoy Volante and Mannos, Bayong Barrios, Hale, Cambio, Session Road and Cynthia Alexander. Hosts are DJ Trish of NU 107 and Nigel Gamalong of K-Lite 103.5.

More treats are in store on Sunday with Mojofly, Paolo Santos, Jimmy Bondoc, Joey Ayala, Cueshe, Barbie's Cradle, Aiza Seguerra, The Dawn, Jay Gomez, Bobot Mabalot and Bong Rosario, and Side A. Hosts are DJ Max Speed of Magic 89.9 and DJ Chinggay of RX 93.1.

MAILA Andres

REUBEN Laurente

Tonight

RJ at Discovery Suites' Serendipity Lounge. Call 635-2222.

RNB Wednesday featuring Stella Ruiz at RJ Guitar Bar along Jupiter Street, Makati; 9 p.m.

Twisted Pair at Suburbia

Side A at Tavern on the Square, Greenbelt 3

Maila Andres at the Pan Pacific Hotel

Silk at Fiesta San Miguel Dusit Hotel Nikko

Tomorrow

Wiseguys at Tavern on the Square, Greenbelt 3

Elderly Brothers at RJ Guitar Bar along Jupiter Street, Makati; 9 p.m.

MYMP and Keystone at Suburbia

Kearney Street at Fiesta San Miguel Dusit Hotel Nikko

Rueben Laurente of The CompanY at the Hard Rock Café

July 15

"Rock to School—The Special Concert" at Le Pavilion, Roxas Boulevard, with Bamboo, Kitchie Nadal, Sponge Cola and Session Road.

Mitch Valdes in A Rockin' Comedy concert at the Captain's Bar, Mandarin Oriental Manila.

Rhythm and Babes at Hyatt Regency's Calesa Bar, 10 p.m.

Nyoy Volante with Mannos and Pseudonymz at Suburbia

RJ and Bloomfields at RJ Guitar Bar along Jupiter Street, Makati; 9 p.m.

Fat Session at Tavern on the Square, Greenbelt 3

Maila Andres at the Hyatt Hotel

K24/7 and Passage at Fiesta San Miguel Dusit Hotel Nikko

July 16

Rachelle Ann Go album tour at Metropolis Star Alabang, 5 p.m.

Nyoy Volante with Mannos at RJ Guitar Bar along Jupiter Street, Makati; 9 p.m.

Wiseguys and Ntwine at Suburbia

Escape at Tavern on the Square, Greenbelt 3

July 17

Nyoy Volante with Mannos at Tavern on the Square, Greenbelt 3

July 18

Freestyle at Tavern on the Square, Greenbelt 3

Zyncxation at Suburbia

Maila Andres at the Diwata Lounge of the Sulu Hotel

A4: From left, Dyords Javier, Pinky Marquez, Isay Alvarez and Bimbo Cerrudo

Route 70 at Fiesta San Miguel Dusit Hotel Nikko

July 19

A4, composed of Dyords Javier, Pinky Marquez, Isay Alvarez and Bimbo Cerrudo, at Strumms Makati

Freeverse at Suburbia

The CompanY at Merk's

Maila Andres at the Casino Lounge of the Hyatt Hotel

Mocha with Spin Art at Fiesta San Miguel Dusit Hotel Nikko

Spirit of '67 at the Captain's Bar of the Mandarin Oriental

July 20

Side A at Tavern on the Square, Greenbelt 3

Twisted Pair at Suburbia

Maila Andres at the Pan Pacific Hotel

Silk at Fiesta San Miguel Dusit Hotel Nikko

MICHAEL V and BJ "Tolits" Forbes were guests recently at the opening of The House of Care, Shopwise's home and house solution center, in Alabang.

July 21

Reuben Laurente of The CompanY at the Hard Rock Café

Wiseguys at Tavern on the Square, Greenbelt 3

Retrospect and Keystone at Suburbia

Kearney Street at Fiesta San Miguel Dusit Hotel Nikko

SHANG CINEPLEX

① FANTASTIC FOUR
MTRCB. GP

② HERBIE FULLY LOADED
MTRCB: GP

③ IF ONLY
MTRCB. PG-13

④ WAR OF THE WORLDS
MTRCB: PG13

PREMIERE THEATRE FANTASTIC FOUR
MTRCB GP

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1 IF ONLY
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2 FANTASTIC FOUR
PLEASE CALL FOR SCREENING TIME
GP

3 HERBIE FULLY LOADED
PLEASE CALL FOR SCREENING TIME

4 FANTASTIC FOUR
PLEASE CALL FOR SCREENING TIME
GP

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WAR OF THE WORLDS PG13	HERBIE: FULLY LOADED GP	IF ONLY PG13
FANTASTIC FOUR GP	THE NEW POLICE STORY PG13	FANTASTIC 4 GP

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CINEMA 1 FANTASTIC FOUR GP
CINEMA 2 NEW POLICE STORY PG13

DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND·EX

PROMENADE GREENHILLS
...a dinetertainment for all!

NOW SHOWING

CINEMA 3 IF ONLY PG13
CINEMA 4 FANTASTIC 4 GP
CINEMA 5 HERBIE GP

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MUSIC MUSEUM

JULY 29 & 30	SOULSISTERS (Jessa,Marissa & Ara)	8PM
AUGUST 5 & 6	NONOY ZUNIGA "THE LOVE CONCERT"	9PM

FOR INQUIRIES & RESERVATION, PLS. CALL : 721-6726 OR 721-0635

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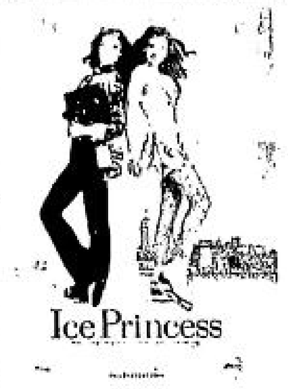
movie schedules events promos

CINEMA

Here are the results for the last week's poll!
"What movies are you into?"
TOP FIVE MOVIES
- Monster-in-law ★★★★★
- War of the Worlds ★★★★
- Herbie Fully Loaded ★★★★
- Fantastic Four ★★★
- Happily Ever After ★★



A Special Back-to-School Presentation
An Inspiring story about following your own dreams
Ice Princess
Big things happen to those who dream big.
Watch it EXCLUSIVELY at SM Fairview today!
Wave 89.1
Official Radio Partner

FOR GUARANTEED SEATS

the podium 633-8976
1 FANTASTIC FOUR
12:10FS/12:40MF/03:00/05:20/07:40
09:25LFS/10:00LMF/11:45END
2 HERBIE: FULLY LOADED
11:45FS/12:15MF/02:35/04:35/06:45
08:25LFS/09:00LMF/10:40END

megamall 633-1901
MR. & MRS. SMITH
12:30FS/01:00MF/03:50/06:40
08:40LFS/09:30LMF/11:30END

cebu (032) 231-3876
1 MR. & MRS. SMITH
12:00FS/12:18MF/02:36/04:54/07:12
09:12LFS/09:30LFS/11:30END
2 FANTASTIC FOUR
11:50FS/12:00MF/01:54/03:48/05:42/07:36
09:25LFS/09:30LMF/11:20END
3 NEW POLICE STORY
11:15FS/11:30MF/02:00/04:30/07:00
09:05LFS/01:10LMF/11:15END

FEEL EXCLUSIVE Now SHOWING EXCLUSIVELY at SM CINEMA

TOMMY LEE JONES
MAN OF THE HOUSE

Witness this hilarious comedy about a Texan ranger teamed up with cheerleaders!
Watch it EXCLUSIVELY at SM North Edsa today!
WAVE 89.1

METRO MANILA

SM MEGAMALL
1. MR. & MRS. SMITH
2. WAR OF THE WORLDS
3. IF ONLY
4. NEW POLICE STORY
5. CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
6. CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
7. CAMPUS GHOST STIRY
8. HERBIE: FULLY LOADED
9. MONSTER-IN-LAW
10. FANTASTIC FOUR
11. PINOY BLONDE
12. MAN OF THE HOUSE

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
1. MR. & MRS. SMITH
2. NASAAN KA MAN
3. CREEP
4. WAR OF THE WORLDS
5. NEW POLICE STORY
6. PINOY BLONDE
7. FANTASTIC FOUR
8. HERBIE: FULLY LOADED
9. IF ONY
10. CANPUS GHOST STORY
11. BATMAN BEGINS
12. ICE PRINCESS

SM NORTH EDSA
1. NEW POLICE STORY
2. HERBIE: FULLY LOADED
3. WAR OF THE WORLDS
4. IF ONLY
5. PINOY BLONDE
6. FANTASTIC FOUR
7. CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
8. CLOSED FOR RENOVATION

SM CITY MANILA
1. NEW POLICE STORY
2. IF ONLY
3. MR. & MRS. SMITH
4. FANTASTIC FOUR
5. HERBIE: FULLY LOADED
6. WAR OF THE WORLDS
7. MONSTER-IN-LAW
8. BATMAN BEGINS
9. PINOY BLONDE
10. NASAAN KA MAN
11. CREEP
12. CAMPUS GHOST STORY

SM CITY STA MESA
1. FANTASTIC FOUR
2. WAR OF THE WORLDS
3. HERBIE: FULLY LOADED
4. IF ONLY
5. NEW POLICE STORY
6. CAMPUS GHOST STORY
7. NASAAN KA MAN
8. MONSTER-IN-LAW
9. PINOY BLONDE
10. CAMPUS GHOST STORY

SM CITY SOUTHMALL
1. FANTASTIC FOUR
2. NEW POLICE STORY
3. WAR OF THE WORLDS
4. HERBIE: FULLY LOADED
5. CAMPUS GHOST STORY
6. MR. & MRS. SMITH
7. NASAAN KA MAN
8. MONSTER-IN-LAW
9. IF ONLY
10. PINOY BLONDE

SM CINEMA TUTUBAN
1. RESERVED
2. RESERVED
3. RESERVED
4. RESERVED

SM SUPERCENTER SUCAT
1. FANTASTIC FOUR
2. PINOY BLONDE
3. HERBIE: FULLY LOADED
4. NEW POLICE STORY

SM CITY BICUTAN
1. PINOY BLONDE
2. NEW POLICE STORY
3. FANTASTIC FOUR
4. HERBIE: FULLY LOADED

LUZON

SM CITY PAMPANGA
1. FANTASTIC FOUR
2. HERBIE: FULLY LOADED
3. MONSTER-IN-LAW
4. WAR OF THE WORLDS
5. PINOY BLONDE
6. NEW POLICE STORY

SM CITY BAGUIO
1. PINOY BLONDE
2. HERBIE: FULLY LOADED
3. WAR OF THE WORLDS
4. FANTASTIC FOUR

SM CITY BACOOR
1. BATMAN BEGINS
2. HERBIE: FULLY LOADED
3. FANTASTIC FOUR
4. WAR OF THE WORLDS
5. NEW POLICE STORY
6. PINOY BLONDE
7. CAMPUS GHOST STORY
8. IF ONLY

SM CITY MARILAO
1. NEW POLICE STORY
2. FANTASTIC FOUR
3. PINOY BLONDE
4. HERBIE: FULLY LOADED

SM CITY DASMARINAS
1. HERBIE: FULLY LOADED
2. PINOY BLONDE
3. NEW POLICE STORY
4. FANTASTIC FOUR

SM CITY LUCENA
1. FANTASTIC FOUR
2. WAR OF THE WORLDS
3. PREMONITION
4. HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY

SM CITY BATANGAS
1. WAR OF THE WORLDS
2. MONSTER-IN-LAW
3. FANTASTIC FOUR
4. PREMONITION

VISAYAS AND MINDANAO

SM CITY CEBU
1. MR. & MRS. SMITH
2. FANTASTIC FOUR
3. NEW POLICE STORY
4. HERBIE: FULLY LOADED
5. PINOY BLONDE
6. HOTEL RWANDA
7. ALONE IN THE DARK
8. WAR OF THE WORLDS

SM CITY ILOILO
1 HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY
2 RESERVED
3 WAR OF THE WORLDS
4 SIN CITY
5 A LOT LIKE LOVE
6 FANTASTIC FOUR
7 RESERVED
6 CREEP

SM CITY DAVAO
1. NEW POLICE STORY
2. HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY
3. PINOY BLONDE
4. WAR OF THE WORLDS
5. SIN CITY
6. FANTASTIC FOUR

SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO
1. FANTASTIC FOUR
2. POOH'S HEFFALUMP
3. PINOY BLONDE
4. WAR OF THE WORLDS

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Pinoy TV's LA launch moved to December

By Marinel R. Cruz

THE JULY 17 launch of Pinoy TV, GMA 7's international channel, in Los Angeles was postponed due to "legal complications" involving one of the pay TV operators in the United States, GMA 7 executives said on Monday.

The Kapuso network was scheduled to launch Pinoy TV by bringing its Sunday variety show "SOP" to The Forum in LA. Another show, at the Bill Graham Civic Auditorium in San Francisco, is pushing through on July 23.

GALVANTE

FRANCIA

"The problem had something to do with [how much] our service would be sold to the subscribers there," Joseph Francia, officer-in-charge and head of operations for GMA 7 international, told entertainment writers in a gathering. "We've solved it, but not at the time we were planning the event."

"We had problems on certain technicalities," Wilma Galvante, GMA 7 senior vice president for TV Entertainment, added. "We hope to visit Los Angeles in December."

"And since the Los Angeles show was postponed," Francia said, "we took the chance to talk with other cable systems, especially in LA, so that Pinoy TV would be more accessible and viewers would have more choices."

American Comcast, one of the biggest ca-

PINOY TV/ A29

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I ♥ PHILIPPINES Biyahe na!

Promo runs July 8 - 31, 2005

See poster mechanics for details. Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 4033 Series of 2005

Del Monte Cooking/Baking Demos:

Get in touch with your culinary skills as you learn how to prepare easy and delicious meals from 2 pm to 4 pm on these dates and venues: July 9 - SM City Manila · July 14 - SM City North Edsa · July 15 - SM City Fairview and SM City Bacoor · July 23 - SM Southmall Las Piñas and SM City Cebu · July 26 - SM City Cagayan De Oro · July 30 - SM City Iloilo · August 6 - SM City Manila

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 3793 Series of 2005

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Ferdie Agustin
Business Executive

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
TV GUIDE
Wednesday, July 13, 2005

HOLLYWOOD DREAM
Hosted by Eric Quizon

THE DREAM BEGINS JULY 17! The much-talked-about reality show "Hollywood Dream" will finally begin! Find out who will get a chance to fly to New York and Los Angeles, meet Hollywood producers and casting directors, get a Screen Actors Guild card, appear on "As the World Turns" and land a role in 2 movies being produced in Hollywood!

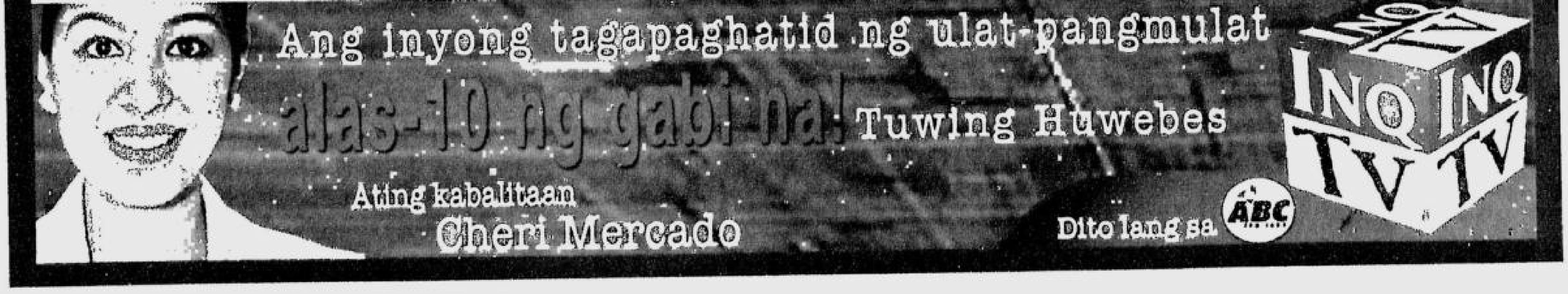
SUNDAY 9:00 PM

ABC

ClickTheCity.com

Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
NBN	Environmental Documentary	Value Vision			Teledyaryo	Pilipinas Ngayon Na!		Talk Ko 'To		Linya		Teledyaryo		Network Forum		Krusada Kontra Krimen			
ABS-CBN 2	Kapamilya Cinema				Pasion de Amor	Mr. Bean	Naruto	Qpids	Meteor Garden Season 2	TV Patrol World	Mga Anghel Na Walang Langit	Ikaw Ang Lahat Sa Akin	Kampanerang Kuba	Green Rose	Oh! Feel Young	Yes Yes Show			Insider
ABC 5			EZ Shop		PBA				Sentro	PBA					Big News	Dokyu		ESPN Golf	
GMA 7	Saang Sulok Ng Langit	Now and Forever	Glass Shoes	Tenjho Tenge	Shaman King	Flame Of Recca	Full House	24 Oras		Darna	Encantadia	Sugo		Attic Cat	Extra Challenge	Nuts Entertainment			Saksi
RPN 9		Metro TV Shopping	Defenders Of The Earth	Hey Arnold!	As Told By Ginger	Wild Thornberries	Sponge Bob	The Insider	NBA On RPN					Extreme Make-Over		Newswatch Now	Keep up the Good Work w/ Joey Lina		Pangako Mo
IBC 13		EZ Shop		EZ Shop		Home Shopping Network	IBC Express Balita	Lifestyle		On Air Tambayan		Direk	Junior Reyes Report	Bestfriends	Celebrity Single	Retro TV	IBC News Tonite	Breaking Barriers	
SBN 21		Morph TV		Oras Ng Himala		SBN Sing Along		Powerline	Gospel Of The Kingdom			Give Us This Day		Behold		The Kingdom Of Jesus Christ		Evening Devotions	
Studio 23						Super Gals		Batman Beyond	Beyblade	Wazzup Wazzup	Mutant X	C.S.I. (8:15PM)		Las Vegas		News Central	Oprah		Just Shoot Me
MTV Philippines			Hangin Out at MTV		MTV Get Spotted		TRL		Backstreet Boys Incomplete	MTV Dives		Wade Robson	Dismissed		Pimp My Ride	On Board at MTV	Making the Movie: Sin City	VH1: Video Collection	
MYX	Star MYX	Urban MYX	Rock MYX	OPM MYX	My MYX	Take 5	MYX Backtrax	MYX Firsts	Mellow MYX	Pop MYX	Urban MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		MYX Live!		My MYX	OPM MYX	MYX Backtrax	Mellow MYX
CNN		Business International		Larry King Live		World News	World Sport	Business International		World News	World Sport	World News Asia		World News	World Sport	World News Asia		Your World Today	
ESPN					X Games Invitational	Pro Billiards '04 Wheelchair Billiards		LPGA Golf				Sportscenter Asia	MLB All Star Game 2005						Sportscenter Asia
Solar Sports		TV Shopping		2005 Fivb World Grand Prix				Las Vegas Summer League				Kotv Magazine	Sports Desk	WTA '05 Baush & Lomb Amelia				NBA TV Daily	NBA Inside Stuff
Cinemax	48 Hrs.			Mind Games			Above Suspicion			A Soldier's Story (7:15PM)				The Firm					Crosswords
Hallmark Channel	Who's The Boss	Missing		HCA: The Fairytaler	Sesame Street		Mad About You	Who's The Boss	The Nanny	Sue Thomas: F.B.Eye		Missing					Strong Medicine (10:35PM)		Sue Thomas: F.B.Eye
Disney Channel	Mr Bean: The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Art Attack/Untalkative Bunny	So Little Time	Buzz Lightyear Of Star Command	Martin Mystery	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr Bean: The Animated Series	House Of Mouse	Recess: Taking The 5th Grade			So Little Time	Sabrina, The Animated Series	Mickey Mouse and Friends	Chip N Dale's Rescue Rangers	George Of The Jungle 2	
Discovery Channel		Science Mysteries		Science Frontiers		Wolf Battlefields		Wild Weather		Global Flyer		First Time Film Makers	Hour China	Mythbusters		Extraordinary Experiences: The Vails Of Rajasthan		Hour Asia	
National Geographic		Showreal Asia		Last Chance Journeys		The Sea Hunters		Wildlife Detectives	Insects From Hell	Wow		About Asia		Nat Geographic Specials		Showreal Asia		Deep Jungle	
Cartoon Network	Scooby-Doo Show	The All New Popeye Show		Tom & Jerry Show	The Woody Woodpecker Show	X-Men Evolution	Static Shock	Mucha Lucha!	Megas XLR	Zoids Fusors	Medabots	The Looney Tunes Show		The Powerpuff Girls	Dexter's Laboratory	Time Squad	Thundercats	Mucha Lucha!	Megas XLR
Nickelodeon	Blues Clues	Rugrats	The Fairly Odd Parents	Cow At The Moo-vies	All That	Are You Afraid of the Dark?	100 Deeds of Eddie McDowd	The Amanda Show	The Adventures Jimmy Neutron	Fairly Odd Parents	SpongeBob SquarePants	As Told By Ginger	Yakkity Yak	Chalkzone	Rocket Power	Hey Arnold!	The Wild Thornberrys	The Angry Beavers	Rugrats
Lifestyle Network	Country Style	Interiors By Design	Decorating With Style	Decorating Cents	Molto Mario	Sweet Dreams	30 Minute Meals	Bill Boggs Corner	Unwrapped	Wolfgang Puck's	E! Entertainment Special The Next Wave		Life Is Great With Brooke Burke	Life & Style		Clean House		Breathing Room	Genuine Article
Star World		The Bold & The Beautiful		Hollywood Squares	Home Improvement	Buffy The Vampire Slayer		The Simpsons	The Drew Carey Show	Star News Asia	Friends	One Tree Hill		The Practice		JAG		Friends	Oprah Winfrey Show
AXN		The Amazing Race 6		Next Action Star		Ripley's Believe It or Not		The Associates (Season II)		Alias (Season III)/Guinness World Records 50 Years 50 Records		CSI: Crime Scene Investigation (Season 5)		Fear Factor (Season V)		CSI NY (Season I)			
JackTV	Banzai	X-Men	Justice League	Wwe Raw				Filter	Just For Laughs	Mad TV		Dr. Katz	Premium Blend	Shorties Watching Shorties	The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	Mad TV		The Sib Show	Street Smarts
ETC		Commited	Knock First	Blind Date	Fifth Wheel	Elimidate	Change of Heart	Seinfeld	Ambush Makeover	Complete Savages	What I Like About You	Veronica Mars		Last Comic Standing		Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	The Tonight Show With Jay Leno	
HBO	My Little Eye			Changing Lanes			Miss Lettie And Me (5:40PM)			Passionada (7:15PM)				Catch Me If You Can				Mask (11:15PM)	
Star Movies			Baadasssss! (3:25PM)				Rocky (5:20PM)				The Haunted Mansion			Die Hard				Critical Assembly (11:15PM)	
Cinema One		Kung Ano Ang Puno, Sya Ang Bunga				Hot Summer				Ex-Con			Persona	Kamakalawa (9:15 PM)				The Grudge 2	
EWTN	Council Of Faith	Angelus (3:15PM)	Refurbishing The Soul	The Donut Man	Faith Factory	The Holy Rosary With Mother Angelica and the Nuns Of Our Lady Of Angels Monastery	Saints For The Third Millenium	The Virtues	EWTN Gallery	Mother Angelica Live Classics		One In Their Hearts	Pope Pius XII	Daily Mass		Angelus (10:15PM)	St. Catherine Of Sienna	Our Father's Plan	

TV SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.


Ang inyong tagapaghatid ng ulat-pangmulat
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Ating kabalitaan
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'I cried over John Prats'

But Heart Evangelista says he was her first love

By Nini Valera

WEARING her heart on her sleeve, Heart Evangelista talked about her first love—John Prats.

"I cried over him," she told INQUIRER Entertainment last week. "I even fought with my dad for him. I'm the type who would fight for my love, and I loved him. You know how it is. You have a first love, but you don't now that you will have one great love. John Pratts was my first love."

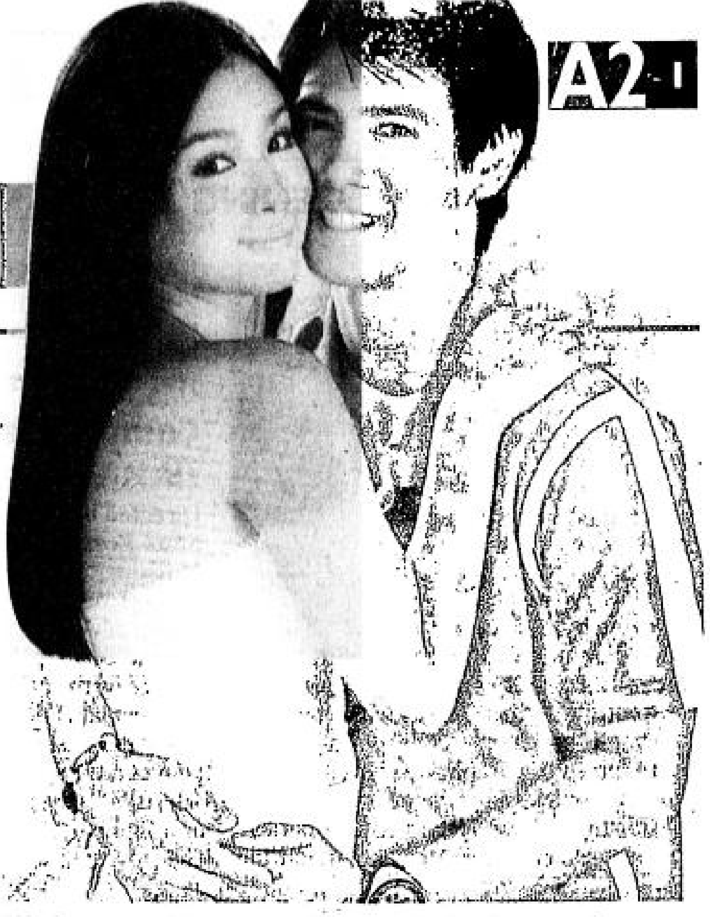
Heart and John were a couple for more than a year. Born a year apart on the same day, Feb. 14, the two were thrown together in various teen-oriented shows on ABS-CBN. They dated, according to Heart, even though her family objected.

One day, he just stopped calling. "I asked him where I stood," Heart said. "He told me he wanted to have fun first. I found out later on that he had another girlfriend."

Then she heard that John had wanted to return to her. "But it's over for me," said Heart. "I go to extremes. I love all the way, but when it's finished, it's really over."

There are men hovering around, but the host of "CloseUp To Fame," a reality-based

I CRIED/ A2-4



BACK when everything was coming up roses for the young lovers

OPENING TODAY

Pinoy Blonde

Directed by Peque Gallaga
Stars Epy Quizon and Boy2 Quizon

In the July 3 issue of the Sunday INQUIRER Magazine, Eric S. Caruncho wrote: "In 'Pinoy Blonde,' the duo play Andrew and Conrad Cunanan, two film geeks—one a Lino Brocka fan, the other an Ishmael Bernal partisan—who are asked to deliver a package, contents unknown, to a mysterious third party. On this slender thread, Gallaga manages to hang his disquisition on Filipino movies. 'It's the battle between sentiment and the intellect, the two reasons why we watch movies,' says Epy. 'The typical Ishmael Bernal film—'Give me something new that I can learn something from'—and the typical Lino Brocka film that says, fill my sentiments, make me cry or make me laugh.' How many of the 14-29 demographic, the core audience that 'Pinoy Blonde' seems to be aiming for, are particularly conversant with Brocka and Bernal? It remains to be seen."

Herbie: Fully Loaded

Directed by Angela Robinson
Stars Lindsay Lohan, Justin Long, Breckin Meyer, Matt Dillon, Michael Keaton

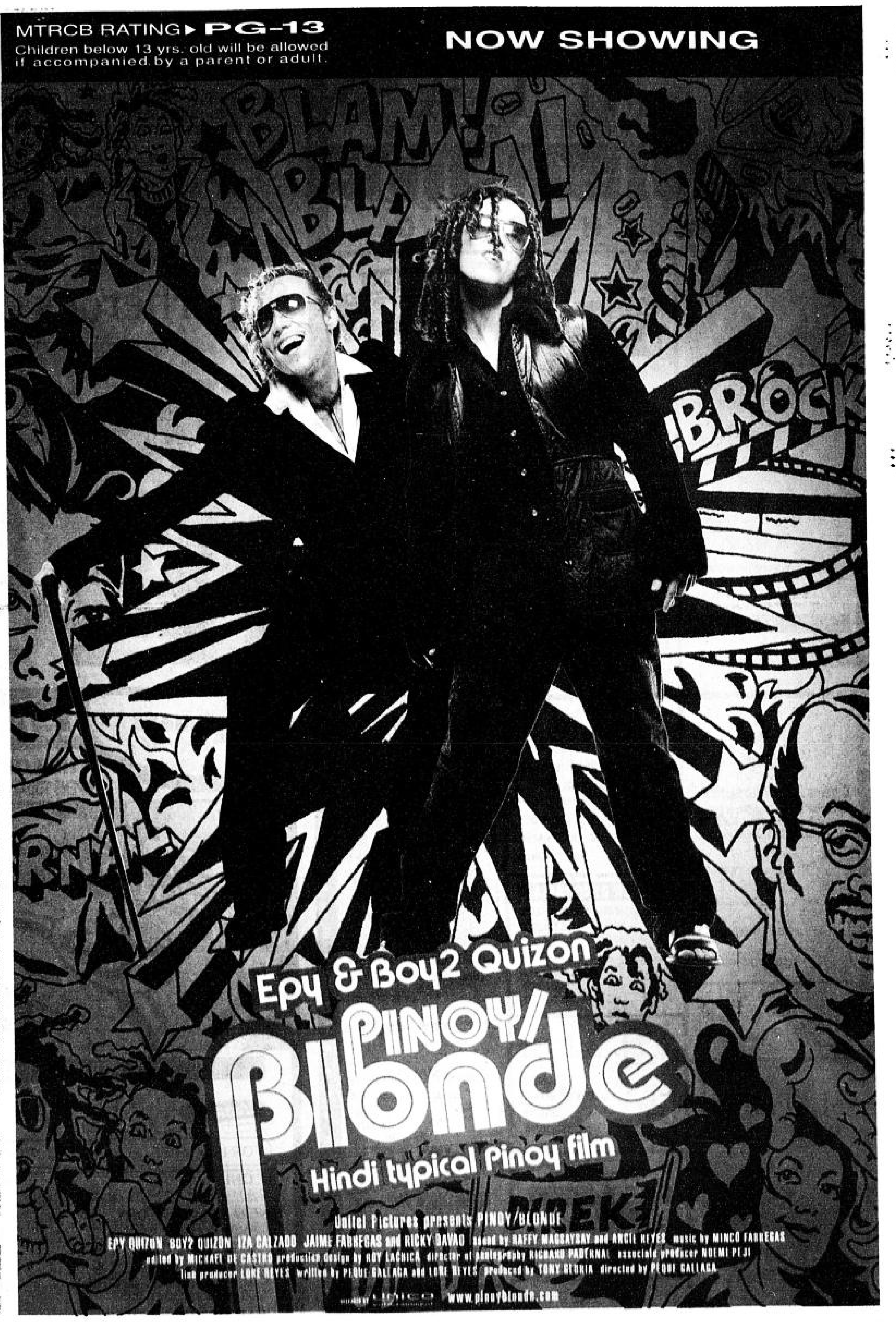
In her review for The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, Eleanor Ringel Gillespie wrote: "If you're already sick and tired of being reminded how, well, fully loaded Lindsay Lohan is, 'Herbie: Fully Loaded' may not sound like a promising vehicle (ho, ho). Given LL's (shouldn't she be a Superman love interest?) annoying and ubiquitous media presence, the killer Plymouth, Christine, would seem a better choice as a costar than Herbie, the pure-of-heart Volkswagen Bug who first drove on screen in 1968. But against all expectations and laws of loathsome overexposure, Herbie is a lot of fun. And so is its star."

The New Police Story

Directed by: Benny Chan
Stars Jackie Chan, Nicholas Tse, Charlie Yeung, Charlene Choi

Tuna of acdrifter.com wrote this review on the Net: "Bouncing back from a box-office loser of the summer and arguably his oddest domestic role as of late, Jackie Chan's return to Hong Kong action with an apparent 'Police Story' sequel is just the news fans have been waiting to hear ... Surprise! The film has nothing to do with the 'Police Story' series of Ka Kui, May, Uncle Bill and the rest of the fun-loving gang ... Dragging and trite."

OPENING/ A2-2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edited by MICHAEL DE CASTRO production design by ROY LACHICA director of photography RICHARD PADERNAL associate producer NOEMI PEJI
line producer LORE REYES written by PEQUE GALLAGA and LORE REYES produced by TONY GLORIA directed by PEQUE GALLAGA
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OPENING TODAY

From page A2-1

If Only

Directed by: Gil Junger
Stars Jennifer Love Hewitt, Paul Nicholls, Lucy Davenport.

According to this website which does not allow reprinting in whole or in part so we're forced to paraphrase everything, the movie chronicles a day in the life of Samantha (Jennifer Love Hewitt), an American student in London, and her boyfriend Ian (Paul Nicholls) who takes her for granted. Samantha breaks up with Ian, gets into a cab and dies. It is at this point that Ian realizes he loves her (just like a man!), goes to bed, wakes up and relives the events of the same day but he's the only one who remembers it. It's like "Groundhog Day," but lower your expectations.

Campus Ghost Stories (Ikisudama)

Directed by Toshiharu Ikeda
Stars Kozue Ayuse, Hyoei Enoki, Yuichi Matsuo, Kôji Matsuo

Scott Weinberg of DVD Talk posted this June 1 review on the Net: "Koji and Yuichi Matsuo are a pair of pop-singer .brothers who go by the name of Doggy Bag, which at least explains how two such uninteresting actors got to star in their own movie. Some kind of a two-part anthology (but not really), [it] tells the story of a creepy little loner of a high-school girl ... who is apparently able to be in two places at once, smash glass with her mind, and cause the death of any silly girl who happens to make goo-goo eyes at the oh-so-dreamy Ryoji."

Challenging times even for US films

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

FOR years now, Filipino films have been experiencing tough times and declining fortunes. Among other factors, local film people blame their woes on the "unfair" competition that their productions have been getting from American blockbusters.

Ironically, it turns out that American producers are also bewailing the decline of the film business in the United States. Industry figures have it that American movies have been earning less than they did during this comparative period last year, for 19 weeks straight!

You wouldn't think it, since US films make millions and billions of dollars, not just in America, but all over the world. And yet, it's true: fewer Americans are going to the movies these days, despite the big-budget productions that have been trotted out to excite them in the last six months.

Industry observers hoped that "War of the Worlds" would break the 19-week slump, but it didn't. It made a hefty $21 M-plus on its opening day, but it was less than the blockbuster figures chalked up by "Spiderman 2" last year.

So, what are US movie producers to do? Keep coming up with even more viewer-friendly movies, and hoping that some of them will make it even bigger at the tills than their counterpart films did last year.

There's no business like the film biz, and so on, with the show—even if the silver screen is looking rather slivered and shriveled this year.

(Just in: "Fantastic Four" accomplished what "War of the World" couldn't. *See story below. –Ed*)

Incidentally, the less than record-breaking showing of "War of the Worlds" has triggered a side-discussion about the positive or negative effects of its lead star **Tom Cruise**'s romantic antics in the past few weeks.

Some industry observers say that Cruise's very public romance with **Kathy Holmes**, and his scathing remarks about anti-depression pills, made viewers acutely aware that he had a new starrer that was about to open, and thus helped his film's showing at the box office.

On the other hand, veterans in the movie biz opine that Cruise's "retro-adolescent" behavior turned off some people, who stayed away from his movie to express their discomfiture.

What *really* happened? Box-office analysts will continue to debate the issue in the next few days—until a fresher controversy renders it moot and academic.

We trust, however, that instructive points will be made that can make other stars more aware of the effects of their personal actuations on the box-office fortunes of their movies.

Some weeks ago, the rumored affair between **Brad Pitt** and **Angelina Jolie** definitely helped make their film, "Mr. and Mrs. Smith" a big hit. But Cruise and Holmes' giddy behavior while Cruise was on the promotions trail for "War of the Worlds" is a different kettle of fish altogether.

There's big difference between adult romance and frisky, smoochy puppy love—especially if one of the frisky puppies involved is already in his 40s!

Feedback

FROM **Elaine Mas** of Makati City: "Reading your column is both entertaining and educational. I have become more aware of viewers' rights to responsible and balanced programming, and of the effect of TV, movies and radio on youngsters.

"I hope that the day will come when people in entertainment will themselves be aware of their obligations and responsibilities, so that viewers—and writers like you—won't have to keep reminding them to do their jobs always with the welfare of young viewers in mind.

"By the way, you should look more closely into how radio stations are polluting the airwaves with irresponsible statements and vulgar songs. Since radio is popular, it is a major negative influence on how young listeners speak and act. Parents need to supervise their children's use of radio, aside from TV and the movies..."

Movies on TV

ON HBO today, 4 p.m., "Changing Lanes." 5:40 p.m., "Miss Lettie and Me." 9 p.m., "Catch Me If You Can."

On Cinemax today, 4 p.m., "Mind Games." 7:15 p.m., "A Soldier's Story." 2:45 a.m., "Fahrenheit 451."

Superheroes end Hollywood slump

LOS ANGELES—The latest superhero movie may have been just fantastic enough to snap Hollywood's longest modern losing streak at the box office.

The comic-book adaptation "Fantastic Four" raked in $56 million during its first three days, apparently helping to end a swoon in which domestic movie revenues had been down 19 weekends in a row compared to last year's.

The top 12 films took in $141 million, up 2.25 percent from the same weekend in 2004, according to weekend industry. Numbers often drop slightly when studios release final figures Monday, but this past weekend still should come in ahead of last year's, said Paul Dergarabedian, president of box-office tracker Exhibitor Relations.

"It took four superheroes to end this slump, and Hollywood is grateful," Dergarabedian said. "Comic-book movies, if properly marketed, are exactly what mainstream audiences want to see in their summer movies."

The movie bumped the previous weekend's top film, "War of the Worlds," into second place with $31.3 million.

Johnny Depp and Tim Burton's "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory" is expected to do big business this weekend.

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at North American theaters, according to Exhibitor Relations Co. Inc.

1) "Fantastic Four," $56 million
2) "War of the Worlds," $31.3 million
3) "Batman Begins," $10.2 million
4) "Dark Water," $10.1 million
5) "Mr. and Mrs. Smith," $7.85 million
6) "Herbie: Fully Loaded," $6.3 million
7) "Bewitched," $5.5 million
8) "Madagascar," $4.3 million
9) "Rebound," $2.9 million
10) "Star Wars: Episode III—Revenge of the Sith," $2.6 million

AP

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SHANG CINEPLEX
6th floor Shangri-la Plaza EDSA corner Shaw Boulevard, Mandaluyong City
Telephone: 633.2227 / 6337851 loc. 171
1 (DOLBY) FANTASTIC FOUR GP
2 (DOLBY) HERBIE: FULLY LOADED GP
3 (DOLBY) IF ONLY PG13
4 (DOLBY) WAR OF THE WORLDS PG13
PREMIERE
(DOLBY) FANTASTIC FOUR GP

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72
1 (DDS) NEW POLICE STORY
2 (SDDS) HERBIE FULLY LOADED
3 (DTS) FANTASTIC FOUR
4 GOLD (DTS) HERBIE FULLY LOADED
5 GOLD (DOLBY) FANTASTIC FOUR
6 GOLD (SDDS) WAR OF THE WORLDS
7 GOLD (DOLBY) FANTASTIC FOUR
8 PINOY BLONDE
9 IF ONLY
10 CAMPUS GHOST STORY

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City) tel 687.6963 or 72
1 (DOLBY) IF ONLY
2 (DOLBY) FANTASTIC FOUR
3 (DOLBY) HERBIE: FULLY LOADED
4 (DOLBY) FANTASTIC FOUR

CINEMA 2000
Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

Cinema 2000 Waltermart (Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383
1 MONSTER IN LAW
2 (DTS) FANTASTIC FOUR
3 (DOLBY) NEW POLICE STORY
4 PINOY BLONDIE

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall (Biñan) tel (049) 411.1146
1 MONSTER IN LAW
2 (DOLBY) FANTASTIC FOUR
3 (DTS) NEW POLICE STORY
4 PINOY BLONDIE

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix (Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771
1 BATMAN BEGINS
2 SIX
3 (DOLBY) WAR OF THE WORLDS

Cinema 2000 Metrotown (Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729
1 SIX
2 SIN CITY
3 (DOLBY) FANTASTIC FOUR
4 (DTS) WAR OF THE WORLDS

Cinema 2000 Waltermart (Plaridel) tel (044) 795.3320
1 FANTASTIC FOUR
2
3 (DOLBY) WAR OF THE WORLDS

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Cinema 2000 Waltermart Makati
Waltermart Center, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Antonio Arnaiz Pio del Pilar, Makati City
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1 NEW POLICE STORY
2 FANTASTIC FOUR
3 HERBIE FULLY LOADED
4 WAR OF THE WORLDS

Blue Wave MARQUINTON
Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sto. Niño, Marikina City tel. 9341927
1 (DOLBY) FANTASTIC FOUR
2 (DOLBY) NEW POLICE STORY
3 (DOLBY) HERBIE FULLY LOADED
4 (DOLBY) PINOY BLONDE

SUPER CINERAMA
Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto tel 733.4238
1 (DOLBY) SOON TO OPEN
2 SOON TO OPEN
3 SOON TO OPEN
4 SOON TO OPEN
5 SOON TO OPEN

Universal (Manila) tel: 7334043 or 2470
1 PINOY BLONDE

THE MARKETPLACE Mandaluyong tel 533.3851 / 533.3856
1 CREEP
2 MONSTER IN LAW
3 GRACIA
4 RESERVED

starmall Movies www.clickthecity.com.ph (Mandaluyong) tel. 7266150
1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 PINOY BLONDE
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX) FANTASTIC FOUR
5 HERBIE FULLY LOADED

Masagana CINEMA (Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274
1 FANTASTIC FOUR
2 NEW POLICE STORY
3 HERBIE FULLY LOADED

Jade Cinema (Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
1 (DOLBY EX) FANTASTIC FOUR
2 PINOY BLONDE
3 (DTS EX) NEW POLICE STORY
4 HERBIE FULLY LOADED

Lianas Cinema (Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 (SDDS) NEW POLICE STORY
2 KALAPATI SA GABI
3 PROSTIE
4 (DTS)

METROPOLIS star www.clickthecity.com.ph (ALABANG) tel. 8504285, 5433994
1 PINOY BLONDE
2 NEW POLICE STORY
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED
5 (DOLBY) FANTASTIC FOUR
6 HERBIE FULLY LOADED

Cine Nepo (Angeles City) tel (045) 887.0121
1 HERBIE FULLY LOSDED
2 PINOY BLONDE
3 (DOLBY) NEW POLICE STORY
4 (DTS) FANTASTIC FOUR

Lianas MovieCity (Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 (DOLBY) FANTASTIC FOUR
2 MONSTER IN LAW
3 (DTS) NEW POLICE STORY
4 PINOY BLONDE
5 KALAPATI SA GABI

Cine Nepo (Dagupan City) tel (075) 515.8489
1 WAR OF THE WORLDS
2 SIX
3 (DOLBY) BATMAN BEGINS
4 (DTS) JACKETS

Fiesta World Mall (Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 FANTASTIC FOUR
2 SIN CITY
3 COACH CARTER
4 CREEP

starmall Movies www.clickthecity.com.ph (Las Pinas) tel (047) 237.7007
1 (DOLBY)
2 RESERVED

Centre Plaza Cinema (Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
1 BATMAN BEGINS
2 MADAGASCAR

Berma Cinema (Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
1 CREEP
2 TAMPISAW

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Herbie FULLY LOADED
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FANTASTIC FOUR 1:00 / 2:00 / 4:30 / 7:00 / 9:30
CAMPUS GHOST STORIES 1:30 / 4:00 / 6:30 / 9:00
WAR OF THE WORLDS 2:00 / 4:30 / 7:00 / 9:30
HERBIE: FULLY LOADED 12:30 / 2:50 / 5:10 / 7:30 / 9:50
PINOY BLONDE 12:50 / 3:00 / 5:10 / 7:20 / 9:30
MONSTER IN LAW 2:45 / 5:15 / 7:45 / 10:00
GLOBE PLATINUM CINEMA
ADMISSION : P 299 / Globe Platinum Subscribers P249
FANTASTIC FOUR 2:40 / 5:10 / 7:40 / 10:10

ALI MALL CINEMAS
❶ HERBIE: FULLY LOADED 12:00 / 1:40 / 4:00 / 6:20 / 8:40
❷ NEW POLICE STORY 12:10 / 2:50 / 5:30 / 8:10
❸ FANTASTIC FOUR 12:10 / 2:20 / 4:30 / 6:40 / 8:50
❹ PINOY BLONDE 11:50 / 2:00 / 4:10 / 6:20 / 8:30
❺ WAR OF THE WORLDS 12:45 / 3:15 / 5:45 / 8:15
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July 16, 21 & 23 UAAP GAMES 10 am / 12 nn / 2 pm / 4 pm
JOHN MAXWELL ASIAN TOUR 2005 July 22, Friday 6:00 pm
July 18, 20, 25 & 27 NCAA GAMES
Aug 1 PBA GOODWILL TOURNAMENT

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PERFORMANCES: Guarana on July 15, Acoustic Jive on July 16 & Mon David on July 17 at the Gateway Roxas Tunnel
EXHIBITS: Mega Magazine's 10 Most Beautiful Women Exhibit ongoing until July 15 at the Upper Ground Floor of Gateway Mall
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BIOLINK Positive changes

"Everything happens for a reason and I'm happy it happened to me."

Dear Biolink,

As a child, I was always very free-spirited and carefree. Being the only girl in a family of three boys, I was used to playing basketball and rough games with my brothers. That's why my fashion sense was usually sporty. I'd always just be in sneakers whenever I'd go out. Comfort rules over looks in my book. My mom would always take me shopping for dresses, makeup and accessories but I was just never into that. In fact, my last up do was when I attended my high school prom!

Ateneo blood runs in my family, so I always felt pressured to study there as well. So I applied, but unfortunately I wasn't accepted. I felt so bad that I locked myself up in my room just watching TV and reading magazines for days. One night, while watching "The Princess Diaries", Princess Mia's makeover inspired me so much that I wanted to improve on myself as well. I went through my closet and realized that all I had were shirts and jeans! You wouldn't even think it was a girl's closet if you saw it. I went to my dresser, looked in the mirror and thought of taking off my braces, my bug-eyed glasses and using contacts instead. And so I did...

BIOLINK
Green Papaya
SOAP

Criselle, Malabon

That movie not only changed me physically, it also made me realize that I had potential to become better. Like Mia Thermopolis, I knew I could step up to the challenge just like what she did for her country. I also knew that I could make my parents as proud as how her grandmother, Queen Renaldi was. I thought to myself "I want to prove what I'm capable of so my family would be proud of me". I have always loved the challenge of coming up with big ideas that it came as no surprise that I was inclined to something that could make me express my ideas freely and imaginatively. It was then that I realized my true calling – to be in advertising. So I applied for the Advertising Management course in DLSU. I passed and everything just took off from there.

Now in La Salle, things are just wonderful. I'm having so much fun; I have a lot of friends, I shop more often and I'm so interested with my advertising classes. Vying for the Dean's list is easier because I love what I'm studying. And just like Princess Mia, I'm involved in a socio-political group called SANTUGON, which is my own way of helping my country.

For me, transformation is the change in all aspects of a person's life may it be physically, mentally or spiritually. Everything happens for a reason and I'm happy it happened to me. It is when we're pushed to move out of our comfort zones that we grow and get to experience new things. Staying a certain way for a long time is safe, but changing for the better is always healthy.

Sincerely,

Criselle,
Malabon

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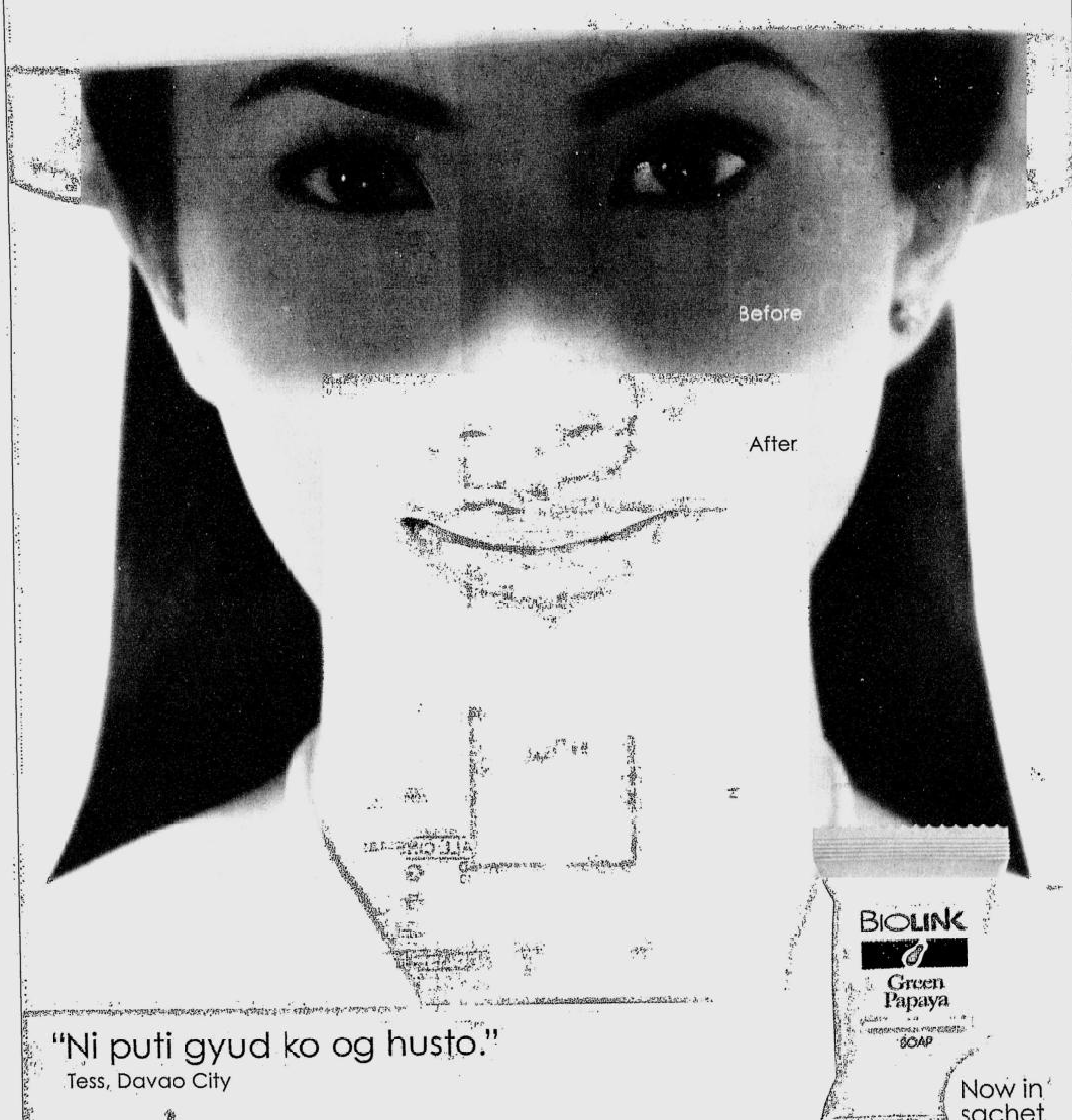

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'WALANG GANYAN SA STATES!'

"I'm not used to this, officer," visiting Fil-Am Hollywood actress Giovannie Pico seems to be saying. Giovannie, who plays an Asian medical student on the latest season of "ER," had just come from a radio interview on Monday when her car overheated on Edsa. The friendly cop, CPD Chief Supt. Alfred Corpuz, was glad to help out. JOAN BONDOC

Last two minutes for Kris

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

I WAS swamped with e-mail and text messages about my column on **James Yap** and his ex(?) **Paula Garcia.** There are a lot of other girls still being linked to **Kris Aquino**'s fiancé. But Kris remains unperturbed. She's been through worse. If love were a basketball game, it's now the last two minutes for Kris. Whatever fouls or missed shots she made during the other "quarters" of her love life no longer count. She's determined to make that one winning shot with James. You can't help but cheer her on.

As for James, has he been honest about his dishonesty? When will the ghosts of his past stop haunting him (has his past become a pest now that it's catching up with him?) Is he really a player even off court? Will anybody cry out, "Foul?"

Past is past all right. But not when you're linked to Kris Aquino.

Here's one reaction I got from a friend of James' who requested anonymity:

James never admitted to anyone about Kris, even to his family. I heard the mom was so shocked— iyak nang iyak! When the news broke in the papers, that's when the family found out. That's [also] when Paula found out and that was it for them.

Like you said, Paula knows where she stands and she refuses to be caught up in the circus. Of course James can deny it all he wants, since Kris claims that he was honest with her. It seems he did tell her everything.

James is good at playing the quiet shy type, but don't be fooled; playboy 'yon. He has been dating around, and was seen in public throughout April, until May. James' reaction? Takot na takot siya kay Kris.

VP's daughter alarmed

I CORNERED the charming daughter of Vice President **Noli de Castro Catherine** (Kat Kat) and asked how she felt about the current political chaos. Her response: "*Nabigla ako sa* turn of events. I can't believe this is happening. Surreal! This is not the kind of attention that my family is used to. But more than anything, my family's praying that the Filipino nation will get over this crisis and that this will not affect our economy 'cause *kawawa talaga ang mga ordinaryong tao* if we suffer another economic downfall."

To lighten the mood, I chided her "Are you ready to become a presidential daughter?" She smiled. "I have always been proud to be my dad's daughter," she said. "Incidental *na lang* whatever title he has. That's not what matters to me. I'm not bothered at all by what critics say about him because I know my dad very well and I know his capabilities."

Even now that she's a mother, Kat remains a daddy's girl through and through.

As a nation we have been through hell and back. Now we are all in limbo. How long before we get to paradise? I think it's not a question of giving in nor giving up but giving way.

KATHERINE de Castro

Bonding with Balot

I ENJOYED bonding with my "godsis" **Lotlot de Leon** at our fave hangout Watering Hole. She was with **Mai-Mai Davao** and some guy friends. Mai and she have remained close in spite of Lot's separation from **Ramon Christopher** (oddly enough, their link is **Jackie Lou Blanco** who happens to be both their sister-in-law). Balot is enjoying her newfound freedom but that doesn't mean that she has forgotten her motherly duties.

"I've moved to my own pad. I enjoy cooking. My kids sleep over when they can," she told me. I teased her "Do you still cook for Monching when he drops the kids off?"

She laughed. "*Hindi na! Pag may* occasion *lang.*"

Balot has learned to live with the stigma of being a separated woman. "People can talk all they want. As long as I know I'm not doing anything bad, why should I be bothered?"

Life is indeed too short to let intrigues make us stop living.

We reminisced about my mom and her mom's colorful friendship. We have so much of them in us. Ate Guy called Lot up a few days ago asking when she and **Ian** are flying to the United States to visit her. As the superstar is facing drug possession charges in Los Angeles, Lot and Ian's presence will surely be a welcome shot of adrenaline for La Aunor. No illegal substance needed whatsoever.

LOTLOT de Leon

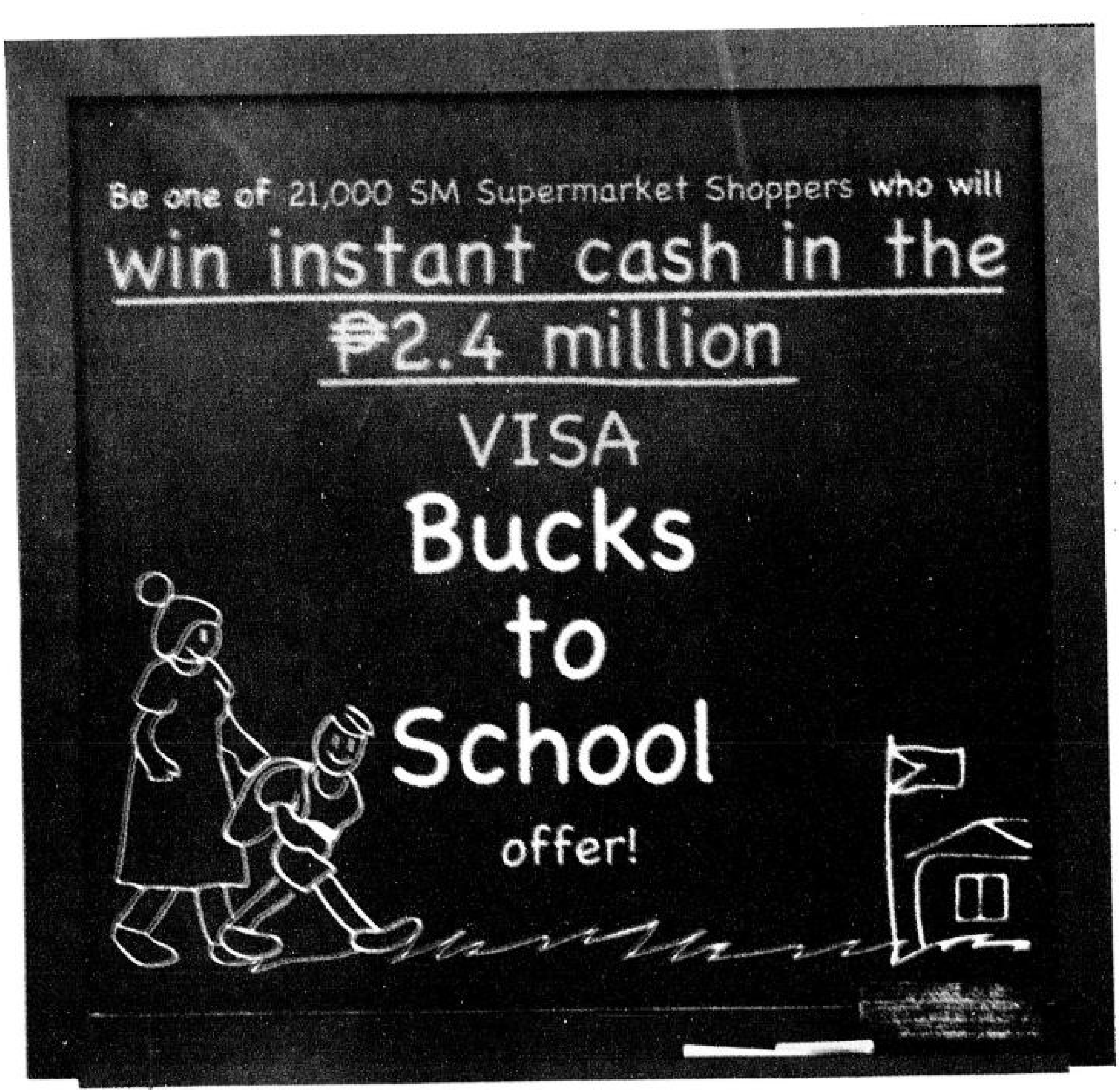
ABS-CBN shows abroad

WORK stops. Meetings are adjourned. Staff and top honchos alike rush home to watch "Pangako sa 'Yo," "Sana'y Wala nang Wakas" and other ABS-CBN *teleseryes*. They're so hooked, they don't dare miss a single episode. This is a phenomenon not only in the Philippines but across Asia, especially in Malaysia, plus Europe and Africa, where various ABS-CBN shows are aired.

And now, Philippine TV's drama princess **Judy Ann Santos** and *teleserye* queen **Claudine Barretto** are also expected to be huge stars in the international scene with the airing of their shows "Krystalla" and "Marina" in Indonesia.

Bringing local programs overseas not only provides entertainment but also serves as a cure for the homesickness of our *kababayan* abroad. The shows bring overseas Filipinos a piece of home.

For feedback, e-mail wateringhole-shangrila@yahoo.com or dollyanne@truefaithband.com



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- All scratch card instant prize winners may claim their prize at the Customer Service Booth of any SM Supermarket branch nationwide. To claim the prize, the cardholder must present their transaction receipt verified by the booth attendant, the winning scratch card, and their VISA Card at the Customer Service Counter. All prizes are tax free.
- Scratch card instant prize winners have until sixty (60) days from the end of the promo period, or until September 15, 2005 to claim their prize. Prizes not claimed within the 60-day period shall be forfeited in favor of the sponsor with prior approval from DTI.

See flyers for details. Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0430, Series of 2005.

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Disney eyeing China

LOS ANGELES—The Walt Disney Co. is planning a range of projects in China, including a theme park on the mainland, incoming Chief Executive Robert Iger told Time magazine in an interview released on Sunday.

Iger's comments come about two months before the Sept. 12 launch of the $3.6-billion Hong Kong Disneyland, the company's second resort in Asia after Japan.

Disney announced last week it would not open a second theme park in China before 2010. The company had said in February that it was weighing a theme park for Shanghai.

Disney forecasts about 10 million visitors at its Hong Kong park every year, which will make the development a key to the company's future expansion in China.

"Our primary targets would be development of a park on the mainland, launching the Disney Channel and building our presence on new media platforms, such as broadband and cell phones," Iger told Time when asked about Disney's China plans.

"And, of course, more Disney movies." *Reuters*

'I cried . . .

From page A2-1

model search for a toothpaste brand, confided that she had grown wary.

"I'm taking my time now," she said. "When I do have another boyfriend, I would be at the right age. I would be ready to fight for him [again]. If it's true love, I would do everything for him."

A real man, she said, has direction in life. "He need not be rich," Heart explained. "[But] he must be God-fearing. He must love me and he must be ready to fight for me. He must be my knight in shining armor [because] like in fairy tales, there are monsters in real life."

She described Ian Dy, a non show biz suitor, as an ideal man.

"A good guy," she said. "The type that my family would approve of. But he's not the one for me. I am looking for something else. He is not yet the one, not yet my one great love."

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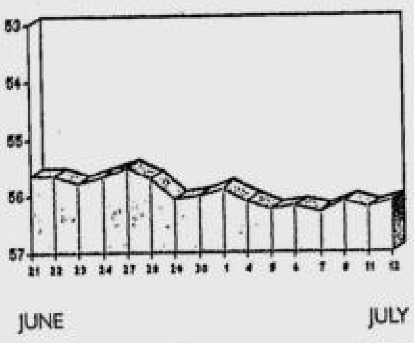
INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



PESO-DOLLAR RATE

₱56.110 = $1

As of 5 p.m., July 12, 2005

¥111.86 = $1

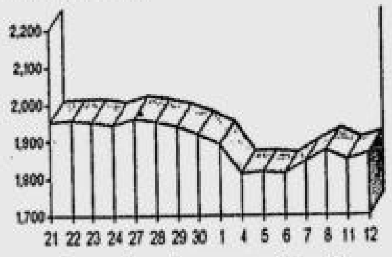
As of 5 p.m., July 11, 2005

GOLD: $426.90-427.40

per ounce Hong Kong, July 12, 2005

STOCK MARKET

Shares close 0.87% higher



(See stock market report on Page B2)

SHARE prices closed 0.87 percent higher yesterday on a modest technical rebound in cautious trade as investors followed President Macapagal-Arroyo's efforts to hold onto office amid allegations of vote rigging and corruption, dealers said.

They said some bargain-hunters emerged to brave the political storm but overall sentiment remained jittery on fears the country's credit ratings would be downgraded again if fiscal reforms are delayed and the country's leadership crisis drags on.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index rose 16.16 points to 1,868.94. It moved between 1,848.61 and 1,871.05.

Turnover reached 164.9 million shares worth P994.6 million. Gainers led losers 39 to 22, with 34 stocks unchanged.

The broader all-shares index rose 7.14 points to 1,142.38.

"This is more of a technical rebound, with the market finding strong support at 1,850 points," said Rommel Macapagal of Westlink Global Equities.

Analysts said yesterday's selective bargain-hunting might have also been prompted by hopes that any possible change in leadership would follow the constitutional process, rather than an extra-legal move. *AFP*

WHAT'S INSIDE

Romulo disqualified as EPCIB director /B14

Merchandise export growth slows down /B7

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE ECONOMY would likely grow by 5 percent this year from last year, the low end of the government's official growth target amid a raging political crisis, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Amando Tetangco said yesterday.

The economy expanded by 6.1 percent last year from 2003.

Tetangco added that average inflation this year might range from 7.3 to 7.5 percent against 6 percent in 2004 if a court freeze on the expanded value-added tax stayed for the rest of the year.

In a forum with the Rotary Club of Makati, Tetangco said the suspension of the implementation of the VAT by the Supreme Court would reduce inflationary pressures in the short term, but noted that the VAT reform remained a key part of the fiscal program that must be fleshed out to restore the government's financial health.

"The (six-month) average (inflation) is now at 8.3 percent and it will go down further," Tetangco said.

Prior to the temporary restraining order on the VAT issued on July 1, he said the BSP was expecting inflation to average 7.9 percent for the full year and 7.5 percent for 2006.

Tetangco said the impact of the political turbulence on GDP prospects for this year could not yet be quantified.

GDP, deemed as the single most important indicator of economic performance, measures the amount of goods and services produced by the local economy in a given period.

He said the BSP, for its part, had been using its monetary tools "sparingly" so as to encourage economic growth.

Tetangco also said that the Philippines could avoid any sovereign credit rating downgrade as the government has committed to pursue fiscal reforms, including moves to have the TRO on the VAT lifted.

Financial markets were waiting for proof that the administration could still pursue tough reforms needed to reduce government debts given the ongoing political turbulence, echoing the "negative" outlook given by global rating agencies Fitch and Standard & Poor's on Monday.

"If the rating agencies would see that the tax reforms are likely going to be implemented, that would be in our favor and we'll probably be able to maintain the credit rating we have now," Tetangco said.

"But it's important that the reform package is implemented and commitment of government to implement it is demonstrated," he said, noting that the government was firmly contesting the Supreme Court's suspension of the new VAT law.

The newly installed BSP chief

ECONOMY/B2

IFC, 4 banks to finance ₱11-B SLEX upgrade

By Clarissa S. Batino

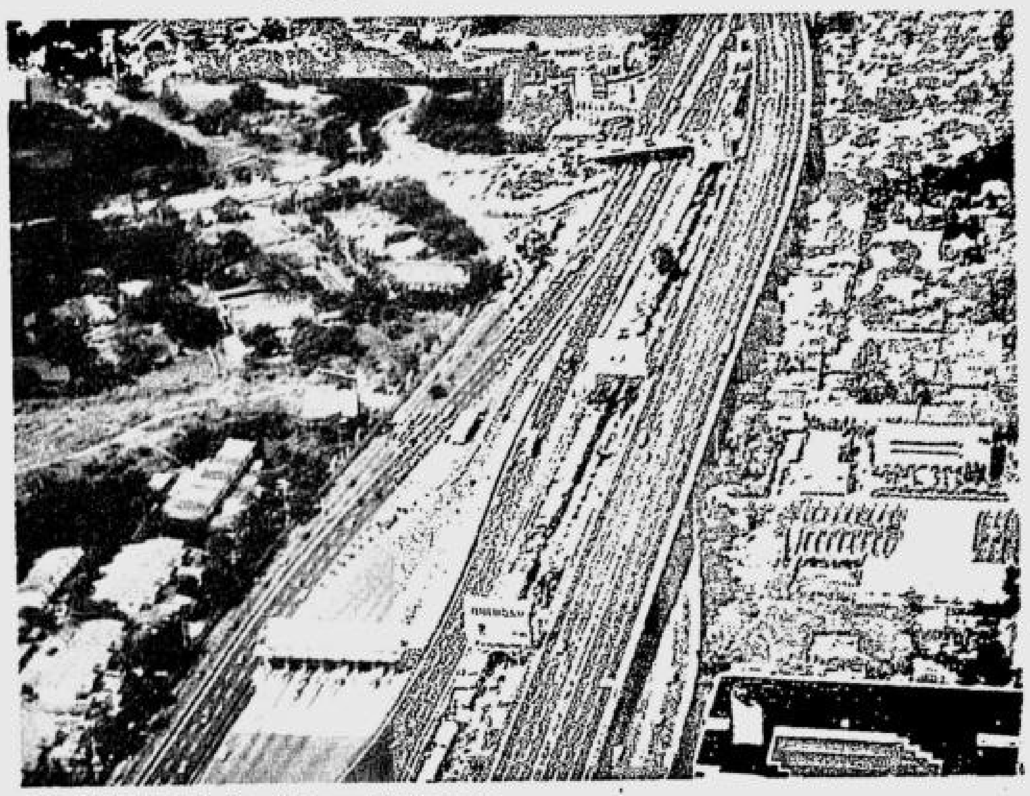
INTERNATIONAL Finance Corp. and four local and foreign banks have expressed interest to finance 70 percent of the P11-billion upgrade of the South Luzon Expressway.

Banco de Oro, First Metro Investment Corp., United Overseas Bank and Maybank are planning to syndicate a loan for the group, according to Mark Dumol, officer-in-charge of MTD Manila Expressway Corp.

MTD Capital, Malaysia's second-biggest toll operator controlling 67 percent of MTD Manila Expressway, said it would raise the remaining 30 percent from internally generated funds.

Dato Azmil Khalid, group managing director of MTD Group said the Malaysian firm was

IFC/B2



A PORTION of the South Luzon Expressway

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Texas firm eyes Malampaya deal

By Abigail L. Ho

TEXAS-BASED Argo Group LLC is keen on undertaking the oil component of the Malampaya Deep Water Gas-to-Power Project, saying it can start drawing oil by May next year if it will bag the project.

In a letter to the Department of Energy dated April 26, 2005, the consortium—composed of Clarksons Shipping Services, The Expro Group, Teekay Tankers and APL—expressed confidence that "a safe, cost-effective and practical oil recovery solution is available" for the Malampaya oil.

"We would like to reconfirm our interest and commitment in assisting in the development of the Malampaya Oil Rim," consortium president and senior partner Bobby Quintos said. "We believe we clearly defined the benefits of our proposed solution and trust the plan may be considered as part of a realistic solution."

The consortium said its flexible multi-stage approach would allow continuous production from the MA-10 appraisal oil well while a drilling rig simultaneously developed other production wells based on progress and reservoir performance.

This approach, the group said, would optimize overall unit recovery cost through early revenue stream generation.

Quintos also pointed out the group's expertise to drill oil from the Malampaya gas find as it had already had specific and direct operational experience through the extended well test production performed on MA-10 in late 2001.

Malampaya consortium members Shell Philippines Exploration BV (Spex) and Chevron Texaco Malampaya, which each held a 45-percent stake in the gas field, opted not to take part in the oil aspect of the project.

Spex and Chevron Texaco had earlier indicated their lack of interest in developing the oil reserves at the Malampaya gas find due to the relatively small oil yield as compared with their other offshore oil finds.

The Malampaya oil rim is estimated to have 30 million barrels of oil.

According to PNOC-EC estimates, developing and operating the oil reserves will cost between $420 million and $450 million.

The operating life of the reserves would be between four and seven years.

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Zijin, Ivanhoe review mining plans

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

ZIJIN Mining Group Co. Ltd. of China and Ivanhoe Mines Ltd. of Canada are having second thoughts about investing in the mining projects of Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. (Lepanto) due to political uncertainties.

A ranking source from the mining industry said the two firms were waiting for the fluid political situation to settle before they resume serious talks to invest in Lepanto's mine projects.

The source added that the investors were closely following the developments in the labor situation at Lepanto's mine site in Benguet.

"The labor dispute we can do something about, but the political uncertainty is beyond us," the source said.

Lepanto's Mankayan mine in Benguet was crippled in June by a labor strike involving 1,635 members of the Lepanto Employees Union (LEU).

The mine resumed operations last week.

FOR THE PUBLIC TO KNOW

On 4 July 2005, an article entitled "SEC MONITORING 12 PRE-NEED FIRMS TO AVOID ANOTHER CAP" appeared in Business World (Page S1/9). The author bannered that "The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) has been monitoring 12 pre-need firms that have offered traditional educational plans to prevent more industry players from ending up like College Assurance Plans (Philippines), Inc. (CAP) and Pacific Plans, Inc."

Legacy Consolidated Plans, Inc. was included in the list of pre-need firms who offered traditional or open-ended educational plans. It must be clarified that Legacy Consolidated Plans, Inc., then **Legacy Plans, Inc. sold a total of 39 traditional plans back in the late 1980s**. The sale of traditional plans was limited to its employees, officers and stockholders. Of these 39 plans, only 23 plans are still in effect with an actuarial reserve liability of only P2.1 Million. Its Educational Trust Fund Equity is P187.7 Million against a combined actuarial reserve liability of P120.9 Million. Legacy exceeded its trust fund requirements by over P 66.8 Million and it does not stand to be adversely affected by its insignificant sale of traditional educational plans.

Scholarship Plans, Philippines, Inc. or SPPI was also mentioned as having offered traditional educational plans, as not having license to sell securities and as being absorbed by Legacy. In 1998, Legacy has infused capital in SPPI to continue its operation. At that time, SPPI had a trust fund deficiency and could no longer renew its license. SPPI is no longer selling securities but Legacy continues to service and pay the benefits of SPPI planholders in its effort to rehabilitate the company.

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PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As July 12, 2005)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	30.5	31.5	30.5	31.5	695,700
Bank of the Phil. Islands	46.5	47.5	46	47.5	4,050,600
Citystate Savings Bank	17.5	17.5	17.5	17.5	200
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.51	0.52	0.51	0.52	810,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	47	50.5	47	50.5	276,300
International Exch. Bank	18.75	18.75	18.75	18.75	3,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	27	27.5	26.5	27	597,100
Philippine National Bank	41.5	41.5	41.5	41.5	4,800
Security Bank Corp.	26	26	26	26	245,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	28.5	28.5	28.5	28.5	1,400
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Manulife Financial Corp.	2720	2720	2710	2720	1,160
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1	1	1	1	106,000
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1960	1970	1960	1970	2,490
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	11.5	11.75	11.5	11.75	44,000
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.97	1	0.97	1	1,500,000
Easycall Phils. Inc.-Com	2	2	2	2	10,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	800	805	800	805	52,930
Ipeople Inc.	3.6	3.65	3.6	3.6	36,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	1.88	1.88	1.88	1.88	7,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	2.5	2.65	2.5	2.65	897,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1595	1605	1595	1595	187,170
Philweb Corp.	0.015	0.015	0.015	0.015	1,500,000
POWER, ENERGY & OTHER UTILITIES					
Manila Electric Co. A	15.25	15.25	14.5	14.5	2,300
Manila Electric Co. B	22.75	23.75	22.75	23.75	396,400
Manila Water Co. Inc.	6.1	6.2	6.1	6.1	916,000
Petron Corp.	2.75	2.95	2.75	2.9	3,608,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	35,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	7.2	7.4	7.2	7.4	316,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.64	0.64	0.64	0.64	250,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	20,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	20,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	30	30	30	30	1,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	30.5	31	30	31	832,000
Pancake House Inc.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	50,000
RFM Corp.	0.71	0.71	0.71	0.71	100,000
San Miguel Corp. A	59	60.5	59	60.5	85,600
San Miguel Corp. B	92.5	92.5	91.5	92.5	43,200
Universal Robina Corp.	15.75	15.75	15.75	15.75	10,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	580,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	1,000,000
Ayala Corp.	280	282.5	277.5	280	105,210
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	4.7	4.75	4.7	4.75	355,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.022	0.022	0.022	0.022	4,100,000
A. Soriano Corp.	1.82	1.82	1.8	1.8	1,390,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	15,000,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	10,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.98	1.04	0.98	1.02	6,910,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	100,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.22	0.225	0.22	0.225	1,140,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	2.26	2.3	2.26	2.28	932,000
Fil-Hispano Holdings Corp.	5.7	6	5.7	5.7	1,115,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	39	41.5	39	40	1,059,900
Global Equities Inc.	0.065	0.065	0.065	0.065	200,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	3.15	3.15	3.15	3.15	20,000
Medco Holdings	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	40,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.16	1.2	1.16	1.18	7,061,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.31	0.32	0.31	0.32	11,490,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.18	0.18	0.175	0.175	1,800,000
SM Investments Corp.	239	239	235	235	97,960
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.165	0.165	0.165	0.165	1,650,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.195	0.195	0.195	0.195	1,000,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	8,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.085	0.085	0.085	0.085	100,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.97	0.99	0.96	0.96	9,790,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.06	1.08	1.06	1.08	833,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (PDR)	11.25	11.75	11.25	11.5	221,700
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	2,200
PLDT 10% Pref Series AA	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	2,800
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	7	7.2	7	7.2	18,982,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.85	0.86	0.85	0.86	170,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	2,590,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.185	0.205	0.185	0.205	410,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.34	0.34	0.33	0.33	1,160,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.3	1.36	1.3	1.34	7,124,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.175	0.18	0.175	0.175	1,000,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.41	0.41	0.41	0.41	10,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	240,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	2,100,000
SM Development Corp.	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	10,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	7.1	7.1	7	7.1	4,522,000
MINING					
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	5,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	4.7	4.75	4.65	4.75	14,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	2.5	2.5	2.4	2.4	20,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	500,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.31	0.32	0.31	0.32	2,890,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.017	0.018	0.017	0.018	5,700,000
Omico Corp.	0.0055	0.006	0.0055	0.006	5,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.77	0.77	0.77	0.77	300,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	50,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	27	27.5	27	27.5	143,500
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	100,000
OIL					
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	20,000,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	6,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	840,000

CURRENCIES

July 12, 2005 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.827952	1.000000	56.2200
Japan	Yen	0.007408	0.008947	0.5030
United Kingdom	Pound	1.455539	1.758000	98.8348
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.106449	0.128569	7.2281
Switzerland	Franc	0.643219	0.776880	43.6762
Canada	Dollar	0.680434	0.821828	46.2032
Singapore	Dollar	0.488929	0.590528	33.1995
Australia	Dollar	0.618567	0.747105	42.0022
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.196216	2.652590	149.1286
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.220782	0.266660	14.9916
Brunei	Dollar	0.487489	0.588789	33.1017
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000085	0.000103	0.0058
Thailand	Baht	0.019718	0.023815	1.3389
UAE	Dirham	0.225434	0.272279	15.3075
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.207800	67.9025
Argentina	Peso	0.289493	0.349650	19.6573
Brazil	Real	0.353357	0.426785	23.9939
Denmark	Kroner	0.134086	0.161949	9.1048
India	Rupee	0.019029	0.022983	1.2921
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.217894	0.263172	14.7955
Mexico	New Peso	0.077560	0.093677	5.2665
New Zealand	Dollar	0.561171	0.677782	38.1049
South Africa	Rand	0.122933	0.148478	8.3474
Korea	Won	0.000794	0.000959	0.0539
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.025959	0.031353	1.7627

Economy . . .

From page B1

said it was also important to put in place a new economic team to sustain the reform program that had recently impressed the financial markets. He said the appointment of banker, economist and former lawmaker Margarito Teves as the new finance secretary was a positive step.

During the forum, Tetangco was asked whether he thought fiscal consolidation could go on without the VAT.

"Moving forward, I think it is important that the other components of the reform package be continued and implemented. This includes of course the VAT, which is a major component of the package, and the government is doing that right now, pushing for the lifting of the TRO," Tetangco said.

Tetangco said the government was also benefiting from gains from the fiscal reform program even without the VAT.

"It's important to remember that there has been some improvement made in the earlier part of the year. In fact, in the fiscal sector, the deficit has been lower than what the government has programmed in the first five months of 2005. The revenues have gone up, which means revenue collection has improved before VAT," Tetangco said.

With most investors still on a wait-and-see mode, the peso and the stock markets remained cautious yesterday.

IFC, 4 banks . . .

From page B1

fully-committed to the infrastructure project despite the political situation in the Philippines.

"MTD's commitment speaks well of the attractiveness of the investment," said Arthur Aguilar, president of Philippine National Construction Corp. He ruled out any sovereign guarantee nor government financing for the project.

IFC is willing to shoulder 35 to 40 percent of the P7.7-billion debt portion, according to Dumol.

"There are ongoing negotiations with the IFC and they seem very interested. What we like about IFC is that it can lend long term like 10 years whereas banks can lend only between 5 and 7 years," Dumol said.

◆

Mr John shows hand

COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

TAIPAN John Gokongwei was seen visiting the Equitable PCI Bank headquarters in Makati late Monday afternoon, prompting embattled chair Antonio Go to suspend a crucial nominations committee hearing to meet with his mentor and looming white knight.

The Gokongwei visit came amid reports that Go's own board nominee, retired Justice Teodoro Regino, has filed a disqualification case against their own corporate secretary, UST law professor Nilo Divina.

According to the anti-Go grapevine, the Gos will use the Divina case, now raffled off to Makati RTC Judge Sixto Marella, as basis to postpone Tuesday's stockholders' meeting, enabling the Go board to indefinitely stay in power.

With the Bangko Sentral now ordering EPCIB's investment bank subsidiary to dispose of the disputed 10-percent "treasury" block, the Gos have to increasingly rely on their 25-percent shareholdings and the bank's "independent" directors such as Regino and Presidential Adviser Roberto Romulo to maintain their hold on the board, against the combined 38-percent stake of GSIS and SSS.

Even before the central bank order was issued late last month, Gokongwei has been rumored as the possible buyer of the 10-percent block, through a share-swap proposal with Gokongwei's savings bank.

Go and Divina did not respond to text inquiries, despite the paid ads put out by the Go family in yesterday's papers accusing the INQUIRER and its staff and columnists of "not once have (they) allowed us to give our side."

Strangely for the Gos, even their sibling and former Equitable PCI Bank chair George Go, who met with a select INQUIRER staff last week, essentially confirmed the INQUIRER reportage on the bank, specifically on how Equitable bank funds had been used by their family in 1999 to acquire and swallow a much larger bank, PCI Bank.

Cory's kingdom

DESPITE a heavy debt burden, the year started with much promise because of rising commodity prices, until leftist agitators working with media-savvy nuns and priests and a few legislators brought things to a standstill, prompting the worried elite to seek state and CBCP intervention to break the impasse.

The subsequent police action resulted in a number of deaths, all of them peasants and unionists, generating more unrest and hardening of positions.

The Philippines? Sorry, but we are actually referring to the state of affairs in Hacienda Luisita, the Cojuangco sugar plantation that escaped land reform during the Corazon Cojuangco-Aquino reign in Malacañang.

"This coming season gives us plenty of optimism," said the 2004 yearend report of the Central Azucarera de Tarlac. "For the second consecutive year, the Philippines will be an exporter to the world market."

From squeaking out P18 million in end-2004 profits, the strike-crippled Cojuangco hacienda was in financial ICU three months later, reporting a net loss of P393 million in a three-quarter period ending March.

Even more worrisome is that the operating losses plus nearly P1 billion in short-term bank loans have skewed the sugar refinery's debt-equity ratio to a worrisome 7.64 as against 2.12 a year before.

Incidentally, P450 million of those loans have been contracted from the state's Land Bank and Development Bank of the Philippines, which the Cojuangcos are now trying to roll over to seven or even up to 10 years' repayment despite Cory's having lost trust in the present government.

A large chunk of the 10,000-hectare hacienda had already been converted into an industrial estate, whose value is expected to still go up higher with the realigned Subic-Clark-Tarlac expressway cutting through the plantation.

Battle of buffets

THE LAS Vegas-style battle of buffets among local hotels has been raised a few notches higher, with Crowne Plaza's Seven Corners cafe giving the Ortigas challenge to the Makati Shangri-La's crowd-packing Circles buffet.

So-named because it has seven food stations, Seven Corners is even offering a "dine in two, one eats free" promo (P1,061 net for lunch, and P1,172 for dinner) in the meantime that the hotel is still in its soft-opening stage.

Heard through the grapevine

THE GOKONGWEIS and the Sys have both expressed interest in taking majority stakes in the planned private-led and -funded airport being proposed on Carabao Island, across Boracay.

Carabao is being envisioned as a more accessible Boracay to handle the expected spillover from the world-famous resort, which is being slowly repositioned to cater to the higher-end market.

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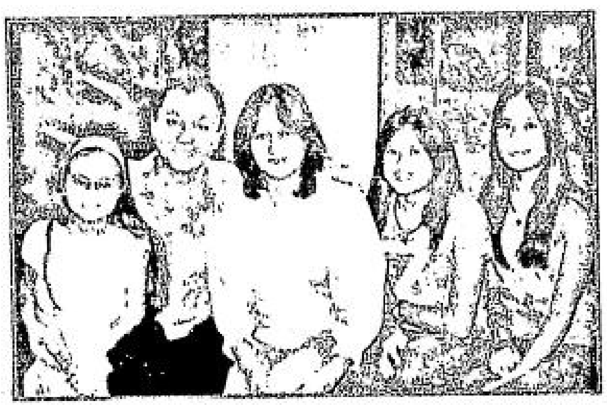

Richard and Emma Lai with daughters Stephanie, Shangka and Shangyne

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Creative mom turns passion into profit

By Ruth M. Floresca
Contributor

CAREER TALES

THESE days, more and more mothers are looking for ways to augment the family income. Unfortunately, not everyone venturing into home-based businesses or sidelines become successful, partly due to insufficient business sense and to a certain extent caused by lack of persistence. However, there are some who do find their niches in the world of commerce.

Destined for business

Kaye Sy-Catral grew up in a family of business people, "As a child, I was taught by my father the ropes of handling any business." She remembers selling pencils and whatnots to helpers when she was about seven years old. Later on, she spent summers manning her mom's bookstore. In college, she sold all sorts of stuff.

A graduate of the Ateneo de Manila University in 1998 with a degree in AB Economics, Catral admits she learned to apply theory into practice when she and her close friends put up Blue Bargain (a shop-by-catalogue venture that later evolved into a *tiangge* business) for a Management Economics subject. "The actual day-to-day thing trains you more than anything you'll learn in class," she says.

Catral, currently a brand manager at a local distribution company, says she was actually encouraged by her aunt to get into the concept cakes scene. Now, she does her "baking" as a sideline.

Unusual product

What Catral sells is something relatively new to the Philippine market. She designs diaper cakes and markets them as gifts and centerpieces for baby showers, new baby visits, christenings or baptisms and first birthdays.

"I first got the idea from watching an episode of 'Sex and the City' back in 2003," Catral reveals. She then surfed the Net, keen on the idea of making diaper cakes for friends having babies. Catral recalls making her first cake for a friend's baby shower, "It didn't really look that good to me, since there was no theme in mind. But my friend and her husband loved and cherished that gift and kept it intact until after their baby was born." She started selling when friends began placing orders. Nappycakes—It's a Diaper Cake! was officially born in July 2004.

Overcoming hurdles

The first few months were difficult particularly the time Catral was trying to secure papers for the business. "They couldn't quite picture out what a diaper cake is supposed to be," she sighs. "They kept on insisting that I was misleading people by naming my product with the word 'cake' because my cakes were inedible." She had to send photos to a local government office to convince them that the product is really a cake. After much deliberation, the officials finally approved the name.

One other challenge Catral faced is finding balance between a demanding day job, a family to attend to and her sideline. Although she allots time for making the cakes after work before dinner, she makes sure she has attended to husband Richard and three-year-old Alexa first before starting on her creations if she gets home late. More often than not, she finds herself making cakes late at night or early in the morning while everyone sleeps. She realized that making the cakes during those times gives her occasion for self-reflection. "I look forward to working at night because it also allows me to rethink the day and focus on some time alone with God," she imparts.

Aiming for perfection

"The cakes I make are my original designs," Catral states. She went through a lot of trials and errors before getting the perfect construction that would hold up the cakes without adding cardboards and other insignificant materials. "I want the cakes to be fully re-usable and make sure that the babies' safety and parents' concerns are taken into consideration," she shares.

All items Catral uses, though sourced locally from distributors, are original and licensed to ensure quality. "I will not sell something I will not personally use myself. If a certain item is out of stock, I replace it with something equal in value or usage," she explains.

One-person team

At the moment, Catral is a one-person-team. She does everything from conceptualizing and buying to "baking" and delivery. She has tried training their helper but found that the quality isn't the same. She admits to being a perfectionist, which is evident in anything she makes. "If something isn't quite right, I make the cake all over again. It is really a craft I take pride in, and anything less than perfect is unacceptable," she adds.

Catral's thoroughness has paid off. Although her advertisements were only made through e-mail sent to friends and two bazaars she joined last December, orders kept pouring in. Friends helped sell her products and one even sold a cake to a well-known TV actor! She's thrilled that there are already recipients-turned-Nappycake-givers. "I save customers' texts of appreciation on my mobile phone and look at them for encouragement, especially during the low weeks," Catral says. In the future, she hopes to find the right person to train—one who will love making diaper cakes as much as she does.

Faith, hard work

Catral recalls, "When I first started out, I would get about five orders a month and I'd be really ecstatic." Now, 10 orders a week is a conservative average though there are still peak weeks and low weeks.

When asked what her secret to success is, she answers, "Perseverance and hard work is the key, plus you have to really love what you're doing." Because there are ups and downs to any business, Catral says you have to be prepared for whatever comes your way. She advises against being in a business for the sole purpose of making lots of money, because when the storms come, you might easily fall back and give up. "If you love what you're doing, and your main concern is making yourself and others happy, then you stick to the business through thick and thin," she counsels.

CATRAL and her Nappycakes.
RUDY ESPERAS

God's blessings

Her sideline, she says, is more of a hobby and a craft than about making money. It just happened to be something she loves doing that has evolved into something more. Catral also shares that she personally feels that without God's blessing, a business will not thrive, "I depend solely on His guidance and know He has my good in mind. I try to give back to God in whatever way I can, because I know He will take care of me."

Moreover, Catral believes that to be successful in any business, one also has to know how to prioritize time. "I know of some parents who get into all sorts of sideline businesses in order to provide 'more' for their children only to find themselves losing time for their families who are supposed to be up there on their priority list," says Catral. She warns parents not to lose track of their goals and that business should never take the place of one's family or work, or it shouldn't be called a "sideline" in the first place.

PE teacher trains kids how to have fun

By Ime Morales Aznar
Contributor

ALL ABOUT WORK

LAUGHTER, wisecracks and brutal honesty—time spent with children are made of these. And teachers who handle classes where students are young children always have a good helping of fun and challenges. Imagine if you have to teach a class of two-dozen Energizer-bunnies how to move and play sports. That would probably leave any teacher, no matter how fit, gasping for breath.

Harry Peñano works as a full-time Physical Education teacher in La Salle Greenhills. He teaches PE to Grade 1 and Grade 2 students. The PE curriculum includes lessons and exercises on the basic movements like lining up and standing, rhythmic gymnastics like walking, jumping, and rolling. "I also teach the fundamentals of basketball, soccer, baseball, softball; and there are classroom lectures also," he says. Aside from these, PE teachers also attend seminars and meetings, and perform the usual "office work" like preparing lesson plans and computing grades.

Fun at work

Peñano enjoys being with his young students. "They are naturally active, but cute; I love to watch them sing and play, they seem to be really enjoying life," he beams. He also finds it quite fulfilling to teach these young kids, because it is "easier to hone them." During the formative years, children start to develop skills and discover new things. "As they grow older, I see their progress and watch them become more mature in their movements—that gives me a good feeling," Peñano declares.

Being young at heart and lighthearted help keep a person happier and healthier. Peñano believes this is true so he never shouts at his students, even if they become quite unruly. Kids, according to Peñano, are "natural-born hypers." One of the most important skills any teacher should possess, therefore, is the ability to effectively manage the class. "Now I understand that teachers must know how to get their attention without being mad or without having to shout, because if you do that, you're the loser-you will grow old fast," he says with a smile.

Channeling energy

The objective is to make sure that the children "enjoy and have fun, for this could be the only time in the entire week when these kids could play," Peñano says. So even if it rains, he makes sure the children get their weekly dose of physical activity by conducting drills in the covered courts, for example. "If they don't play, they become hyperactive in the classroom because of all the pent-up energy, then the other teachers complain," he says with a laugh.

Handling difficult classes is just one of the many challenges that a PE teacher, or any teacher for that matter, has to face. Dealing with accidents is yet another story, and PE teachers get more of that. "There will always be accidents especially in sports," Peñano says, "and as their teacher or coach, you always have to be responsible for them." But despite all these, love for work is still the main motivation. Peñano is convinced that "if you truly enjoy what you're doing, the difficulties will just pass."

Accidental teacher

Peñano graduated from the University of Santo Tomas with a degree in Secondary Education, major in Physical Education. He says he never really planned to become a teacher. "I just wanted to finish college, and I ended up in the College of Education quite by accident," he reveals. In his junior year, he chose to major in PE and that marked the start of his very fulfilling foray into the world of teaching and sports.

"I immensely enjoyed the years I spent as a PE major; I really learned so much about life and I got to mingle with different kinds of people," Peñano remembers, "My mind set changed, too, when before I only wanted to finish school, I became more determined when I started to learn about the technicalities in sports." After spending some time teaching grade school and high school students during his on-the-job-training days, Peñano became determined to teach. So after passing the Licensure Examinations for Teachers, he decided to teach in La Salle Greenhills. "If I were going to teach," he says, "I would teach only in La Salle Greenhills, having spent about half of my life there, I felt that I wanted to give something back, to work for the institution who molded me to become a better person."

PENAÑO
IME AZNAR

Many hats

"I believe I'd still be a PE teacher 10 years from now," Peñano predicts. "It's not a lucrative career but if you have a simple lifestyle, like mine, then you will do very well," he says. According to him, the salary of a PE teacher is just enough to sustain a single person comfortably, or allow a family to live a decent lifestyle.

"Sports will always be a part of the lives of Filipinos, so if you want to study Physical Education, you do have a future," Peñano says. "If you can't or don't want to be a teacher, you can be a coach, or a gym instructor or trainer, a dietitian, or you could conduct summer sports programs, or become a dance instructor!" he says with a grin. Peñano admits, "The college education is so complete that graduates can actually become a lot of things."

(*Send feedback to* blubitel@yahoo.com)

How do you turn a failing employee into a success?

WORKING WOUNDED

Bob Rosner

DEAR WW: I've got an employee who has a great deal of potential, but he isn't getting the job done. Any advice on how to turn this around?

Frustrated

As I was thinking about your question, I thought of John Gladney. He was arrested in Columbus, Ohio after robbing a bank and jamming the moneybag inside his pants. He was easy to spot because of his pronounced limp. How did the police know he'd be limping? Well if an exploding dye pack had gone off in your pants, you'd be limping too.

Unfortunately, Mr. Gladney isn't the only one limping through his workday. Many of us work with people who are clearly wounded by their jobs. It's great that you are aware of and concerned about the problem. And what's even better, there are things you can do to improve an employee's performance. I've listed a few possibilities below. For more, check out Moiali et. al. "Managing for Excellence" (DK, 2001).

Are they lacking the skills? Many of us are doing jobs that are more complex than they used to be. Yet, many companies don't recognize this and often don't put effort and money into training to ensure that people have the necessary skills. Talk to the members of your team and arrange for training or tutoring to help them gain the required expertise.

Is procrastination the problem? It's important to give people the opportunity to work through procrastination. As someone wrote to me in an e-mail recently, you eat a whale one bite at a time. Working with the person to break the job down into manageable steps can often turn inactivity into productivity. One caution, there is a difference between making help available and doing the job for them.

Are they frequently absent? Absenteeism may be caused by the person not feeling part of the group or it may be caused by external factors that you aren't fully aware of. Taking the time to find out what is causing the person to miss work just might turn a problem employee into a productive one.

Do they have personal problems? Life happens. With a one-year-old daughter, I understand how life sometimes gets in the way of finishing your work. If the person has a good track record of doing the job you might want to see if something at home is distracting them. Offer a referral for professional help and/or temporarily reassign their duties. You also might see an increase in loyalty from other employees when they see you stand up for someone going through a difficult time.

Are they demotivated? Most managers believe that a paycheck should be motivation enough. But there are times when something more is needed. The important thing is for you to know what motivates each person and for you to give him or her a spark when they need it.

Follow tips and your people won't be limping along at work and hopefully, their pants won't be on fire either.

Here are the results from a recent workingwounded.com/ABCnews.com online ballot: If an employee is failing at work, which song title best describes how you think it should be handled?

—Cry Me A River. 7.5 percent

—He Ain't Heavy, He's My Brother, 24.2 percent

—Bye Bye Blackbird, 30.1 percent

—You Can't Always Get What You Want, 38 percent

(*Mr. Rosner, an internationally syndicated columnist, author and speaker, is based in Seattle, Washington, USA. E-mail him at* bob@workingwounded.com.)

ILLUSTRATION BY DIONISIO BUCCAT

Call center employee is bothered by political crisis

By Tita Datu Puangco

Advice
FOR THE ANXIOUS PERSON AT WORK

I AM a call center representative who works in an office along Ayala Avenue. When I listen to radio and television, read the newspapers and experience the media hype, I get the impression that there is a snowballing of the call to oust President Arroyo. However, last Friday, I saw just a small but noisy crowd of supporters for the "oust Gloria movement."

You suggested in last week's article that we should recount the votes to determine who really won in the last presidential elections. Is it not easier and quicker if Gloria will just resign? If this situation is prolonged, what will happen to the country? Investors will flee. OFWs (or overseas Filipino workers) have threatened to boycott remittances. In all these confusion, what criteria do we use to decide which side to take? We know that many people are taking advantage of the situation to pursue their own interests.

How can we discern what to do? What is the best reaction to the political crisis?

Call Center Rep

Yes, I agree these are confusing times. Precisely because many ideas, issues and opinions are whirling around us, we need to draw back, make time to think and reflect and to discern. For some of us, who like things to be orderly, who at the sight of possible conflict try to smoothen things, these are disturbing times. Our great desire for "smooth interpersonal relations" is a trait that is very Filipino. This view nudges us to go for the quick and easy solution. For many, this means President Arroyo resigning, and everything back to normal.

There is, however, another perspective. We can view the current events to demonstrate that we are in the process of maturing as a democracy. The debate is healthy, people finally are thinking through what is happening and recognizing the great need to reform our institutions. There is a need to go through the constitutional process of impeachment to ferret out the truth. The process, though painful, will result in something constructive for the nation in the long term. It also considers the desire of President Arroyo to have her day in court. As one text message says. "Every citizen, even the President, is assumed innocent until proven guilty. Let the rule of law prevail."

Reflections

So how does one discern? I don't claim to have the secret to discernment. All I can share are the fruits of my reflections. First of all, we have to pray. As Christians or Muslims, we believe that God is the source of all wisdom. Through meditation and intense prayer, He shares with us the secrets of wisdom.

This is what I personally think of the pastoral letter of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines. After four days of prayer and deliberation, they reflected with wisdom on our political dilemma, while taking seriously the role of moral guardian.

Second, now is the time to move decisively towards a politics of unity. We have to hear and respect all the opinions and views forwarded, then, move towards collective search for solutions as a country. A solution that benefits only one sector will likely alienate the others, and the solution will likely compound into more problems. For example, if President Arroyo resigns or is ousted through extra-constitutional means, the many millions who voted for her will feel completely disrespected. This in my mind is what happened during the discontinued Erap impeachment trial that resulted in Edsa 3.

On the other hand, if the administration supporters' desire is to simply move on and accept the President's apology for her "lapse in judgment," this position is likely to offend the moral sensibilities of people who feel that the President has to go because of her possible lack of legitimacy. And this will not work either.

Country first

You mentioned foreign investors. Before we play up to them, let us think about ourselves first. Because if we do what is right, if our solutions are within the bounds of law, then investors will stay because they recognize that we a have reliable playing field. What will scare investors is the uncertainty brought about by lack of due process (if this can happen to the President, then it can happen to a foreigner).

On our OFWs, let us reach out to them so they are part of the discernment and learning process. Let us have them recognize that withholding remittances hurt the people they love most, not those in power.

Multi-sectoral meeting

So, what is my proposal? My proposal is to have a multi-sectoral meeting with representatives of the different branches of government, the academe, inter-religious groups, NGOs and civil society etc. They should come together first of all in prayer, then in discussion and action to propose solutions and a national agenda of action. I support the suggestions of former President Ramos for a council of leaders to lead the multi-sectoral consultation. When the discussions happen, let us request the media to participate instead of simply covering the event. We don't want politicians grandstanding for the cameras. Let us gather the best facilitators in the country to ensure that the will of the participants are properly reflected and summarized. Let us put on our patriotic Filipino hat, discussing from the heart. Let us brainstorm and act together. Then, the creative solutions developed are likely to be acceptable and respectful of all sectors. These are then presented to the President. Let us make the President, while part of the problem today, also remember that she holds part of the solution.

The problem confronting us is multidimensional. It is not simple. Everyone recognizes that the issue with the President is a symptom of deeper systemic problems. The solutions therefore may be a combination of short, medium and long-term programs and actions. Let us make of this crisis a springboard towards national unity and development.

Meantime, I suggest the best support we ordinary citizens can give our country at this time is be aware and be involved but also to focus on doing our work well. Take care and God bless.

(Ms Puangco is CEO and chair of Ancilla Enterprise Development Consulting. Send feedback through e-mail to advice@ancillaedc.com.ph *or fax to 892-2902.)*

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Boosting Sales Force Performance is a half-day practical and knowledge-updating seminar on how sales managers and directors can increase the productivity and performance of their existing sales organizations. Boosting Sales Performance will share time-proven strategies and tactics to get the most out of your existing sales people and improve your sales organization in the future.

Session Fee

Individual	P 5.500 + VAT
3 Persons (from one company)	P 5.000 each + VAT
5 Persons (from one company)	P 4.500 each + VAT

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Academician Class-Room:
P 3.500- per person + VAT
Limited for 5 full-time academicians
(Provided with recommendation letter from the university)

Student Theater:
P 2.500 per person + VAT
Limited for 10 undergraduate students (with valid ID, age max 25 years old, no table, no interactions)

PMA Member Special Rate ; P 5.000 + VAT

For further information and payment please contact:
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Suite 1402, 14F, BDO Plaza, 8737
Paseo de Roxas, Makati City.
Phone. (632)816-1643 / (632)817-0706
Fax: (632)325-0288
Mobile: +639175003127

Program Outline

3.30 - 15.00	Driving Your Sales Force Productivity I The sales landscape is changing. No longer is it just a case of selecting, training and motivating a sales team. The role of the sales organization is rapidly changing and sales force management is now, more than ever, increasingly instrumental in overall company success. The focus on segmentation, strategy, people and systems are the keys to boost sales performance in any organizations
15.00 - 15.30	Tea / Coffee Break
15.30 - 16.30	Driving Your Sales Force Productivity II Boosting sales force productivity is the science of success. Learn what drives the efficiency and effectiveness of a sales force. Find out ways to increase your overall sales performance by balancing the need for operational efficiency and result-oriented effectiveness.
16.30 - 17.00	The 12 Fundamental Sales Management Truths Be an effective sales manager by learning the 12 down-to-earth fundamental truths of sales management which can help you build a powerful and high-performing sales team in your organization

How Will You Benefit
1 Understand How the Sales Landscape is Shifting
2. How to Turn your Salesforce Organization into a Profit Engine
3. How to Build and Grow a High Performance Salesforce
4. How to Increase Sales Efficiency and Effectiveness through Salesforce Productivity Drivers
5. How to Leverage Sales Process Measurement and Sales Performance
6. How to Unleash Sales Recruiting, Sales Training, Sales Coaching, and Sales Management techniques to increase Sales Productivity
7. How to be an Effective Sales Manager which can help you Build a High-Performing Sales Team in your Sales Organization

Featuring: HERMAWAN KARTAJAYA
Asian Marketing Guru (CIM-UK, Dec 2003)
President of World marketing Association (WMA)
Founder and President of MarkPlus&Co

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&

CORPORATE SOLUTIONS 2005
2nd Trade Show on Marketing Support Services, Business Solutions, Office Equipment and Supplies, Furniture & Interiors

July 14-16, 2005 | World Trade Center Metro Manila
Exhibit Hours: 10:00am - 7:00pm

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- *Tens of thousands of corporate giveaways and premiums to fit any budget size*
- *New trends in marketing & promo services*
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- *BLIMS Office World's corporate showcase*
- *CHRISTMAS PAVILION with fabulous décor concepts for your establishments*
- *Indoor designer garden ideas for greening your offices by PIDO*
- *CORPORATE ELAN, a fashion show of the hottest business attire and uniforms for men & women by corporate image maker Digna Rosales in cooperation with The Leather Collection on July 14, at 5:00 pm in Hall A*

ADMISSION IS FREE! Just register at the Organizer's Counter.
Students will be allowed entry on Saturday, July 16, 2005.
Children below seven (7) will not be allowed inside the exhibit area.

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SIGHMEDIA DIGITAL PRINTING

For inquiries contact WORLDEXCO, INC.
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32nd ARTDO
International Management and HRD Conference
September 7-9, 2005, Manila Hotel

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2. Lim Hong Tat
President and Chairman of the Board, Maybank, Malaysia
3. Sandy Prieto Romualdez
President/CEO, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Philippines
4. Manuel M. Lopez
Chairman and CEO, Manila Electric Company, Philippines
5. Francis Andrews
Senior Vice President - Operations
International Container Terminal Services Inc., Philippines

HRD Practitioners' Forum
1. Imelda Centeno
HR Director, United Laboratories, Philippines
2. Florence Ho
Training Consultant, Macau Management Association, Macau
3. Peter Chee
CEO, Institute of Training and Development, Malaysia
4. Mohammed Misfer
General Manager, Saudi Aramco Training and Career Development, Saudi Arabia

Track 1 - Culture Building
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Pre-conference Workshop on September 6, 2005 by William J. Rothwell, Pennsylvania State University, USA
Topic: The Workplace Learner: Making Workers More Self-Directed In Their Learning

EWB Corporate Suite: Getting the work done

DELEGATING is empowering people. Certainly, when people are asked to take charge, they gather their wit and grit to carry out the assigned task. By rising to the occasion, they bring out the leader in them and learn to take responsibility for their actions. That's why success is closer to companies who know the concept of delegation.

Usual administrative tasks like payroll and check preparation are vital functions yet they can be delegated, better yet, outsourced. In this way, regular employees can have more time to attend to matters that generate revenues to help the business.

Organizations planning to take the outsourcing option can rely on East West Bank's innovative offering designed to suit the growing complex requirements of businesses like yours. East West Bank's Corporate Suite gives you the comfort of knowing that more of your routine and tedious tasks are being taken cared of, allowing you to focus on the more pressing needs of your business.

East West Bank Corporate Suite lets you outsource administrative functions at a minimal cost. Plus, you are assured of our unique, highly personalized and efficient service through our Corporate Suite Services like PayrollAssist, Collect@Site, eDisbursement, ChequePrepare, BillsCollect, BizCheque, and ChequeDepot.

As your business grows, you'll need more people to run it effectively. By adding manpower, usually the task of payroll preparation will demand more of your time and attention. That's why East West Bank came up with PayrollAssist, a unique facility that makes your payroll process easy and convenient. It offers a complete solution to all your payroll requirements, starting off with periodic salary credits to government mandated deductions. With its superior capabilities, PayrollAssist supports not just bi-monthly payroll credits but also weekly and even daily computation of employees' salaries. It supports a multi-user platform that can determine authorized users per payroll classification. And with PayrollAssist, data transmission is done online for added convenience.

Another service of EWB's Corporate Suite is Corporate Collection with a set of collection facilities consisting of BillsCollect, ChequeDepot, and Collect@Site. When your business entails collecting or receiving payments on a nationwide scale, EWB's BillsCollect can answer your collection requirements. It is a facility that serves as your payment center, accepting payments in cash or in check. All payments accepted through our network are credited to your account immediately, within the same day. BillsCollect systematized procedure eliminates physical handling of payments and consolidation of collections. The bank will provide you with a daily summary of collections received through the network, transmitted to you online via the Internet or via electronic file transfer.

When you're handling a substantial volume of postdated checks, EWB's ChequeDepot comes as a welcome tool to manage these checks. It is a specially designed facility by which East West Bank takes care of safekeeping and warehousing of postdated checks, for credit to your account as soon as they fall due. With ChequeDepot, manual tracking of postdated checks will be a thing of the past because the bank uses an inventory-monitoring program that easily tracks down checks based on value date.

Another feature of EWB's Corporate Suite is ChequePrepare. Its specially designed check-cutting facility takes away the burden of manual preparation, individual signing, and tedious disbursement of your checks. ChequePrepare is packed with all timesaving, cost efficient features companies would surely appreciate. Payment instructions are sent to the bank in a secured, encrypted file. ChequePrepare also undertakes the preparation.of checks to payees on your behalf. Checks are issued with accompanying vouchers to include payment details. You can also use the bank's branch network to release checks directly to the payees through our Personal Banking Centers (PBC's) for easy and convenient access. To track and monitor the status of checks with a periodic report detailing the list of checks issued, you can use online monitoring as well. Plus, ChequePrepare is equipped with a defined multi-level user ID to ensure that only authorized users can issue payment instructions and guarantee safety of your account.

A fitting complement to CorporateSuite is EWB's Corporate NetAccess that allows companies to enroll their accounts at www.eastwestbanker.com and do regular banking transactions like balance inquiries, bills payment, fund transfer, and downloading CorporateSuite reports. Enrollment in NetAccess is free of charge.

There's no escape in attending to important matters if you use East West Bank's Corporate Suite. With better managing of tasks by Corporate Suite, they become less of a burden to the company's operations.

Indeed, companies can improve bottomlines by actually improving cash administration. It is by delegation where businesses find more time to foster growth and fast-track work production.

For more inquiries on Corporate Suite, call East West Bank Customer Hotline at 8-ACCESS (822-2377).

PLDT BUSINESS SOLUTIONS
DevCo

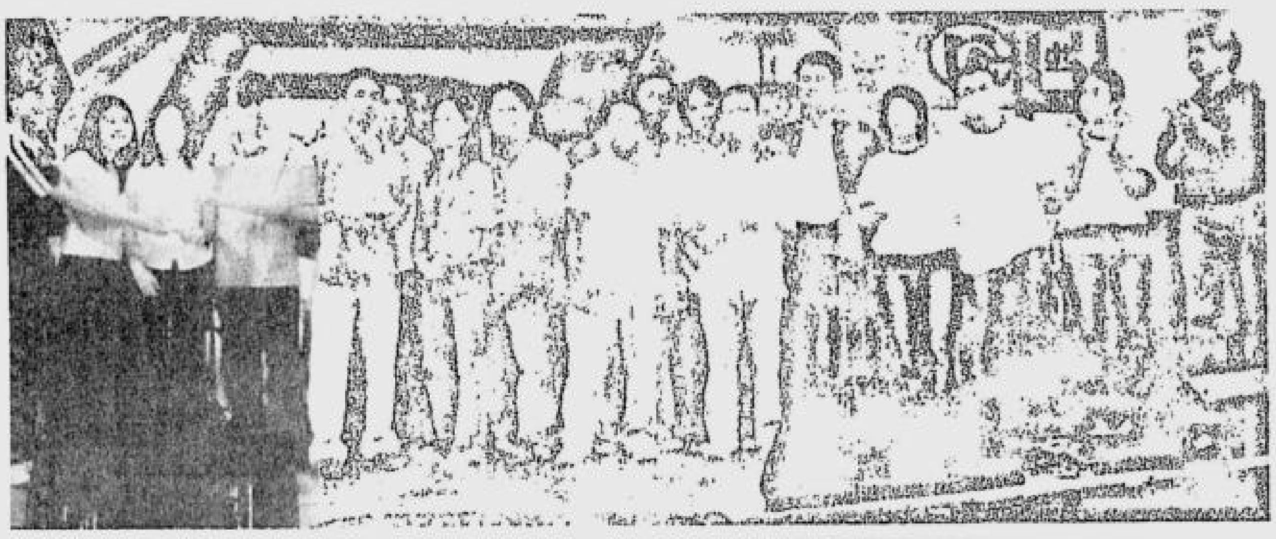
PLDT-DEVCO PHILIPPINES CONTRACT SIGNING

PLDT recently signed a memorandum of agreement with Devco Philippines Inc, a subsidiary of the Wallen Group for a faster and premium service connectivity. Present during the signing are (seated, from left): PLDT's Renato Castañeda, corporate regional business head; Ernesto R. Alberto, SVP and corporate business head; DevCo's Patrick Slesinger, CIO and director; and Alexander Ramos, operations head; (standing, same order): PLDT's Cesar M. Enriquez, corporate business operations officer; Jane Callilung, regional sales relationship manager; Clark Development Corporation manager Lito Mercado; corporate regional business SRM Juan Alonzo IV and corporate customer telecom solutions consultant Joseph de Guzman.

Signing
for Pe

PEACE PROGRAMME IN MINDANAO

The Governments of the Philippines, Australia and New Zealand and the United Nationa (UN) recently signed an agreement to support the Action for Conflict Transformation (ACT) for Peace Programme in Mindanao for the next five years. Shown at the ceremonial toast during the signing event were (from left): Vic McGuigan, First Secretary and Deputy Head of Mission, New Zealand Embassy; Ambassador Tony Hely, Australian Embassy; Deborah Landey, UN Resident Coordinator and Resident Representative, UN Development Programme (UNDP); Executive Sec. Eduardo Ermita; Sec. Romulo Neri, National Economic Development Authority (Neda) Director General; Sec. Jesus Dureza, Presidential Assistant for Mindanao and Chair, MEDCo; and lawyer Emma Salmani, Advisor to the ARMM Regional Governor.



FEU, DLSUGB PROCLAIMED MOST VALUABLE ENTREPRENEURS AT VBL

Philippine Electronics and Telecommunications Federation (Petef) president Renato Garcia (extreme right) and National Telecommunications Commissioner Ronald Solis (5th from right) congratulate the winners of the recently concluded Virtual Business League (VBL). Far Eastern University won in the Undergraduate category, garnering an average of 1.80 points, followed by Roosevelt College with 2.4 points and De La Salle University with 3.6 points. De La Salle University Graduate School of Business won in the Graduate category garnering 1.40 points. For more information visit: www.petef.org.ph or contact Petef Foundation at the following: 813-6398/759-3870; fax 813-6397.

Alaxan's 'Alis Aray ' hits the PMA, WPD

THE PHILIPPINE Military Academy in Baguio City along with it all it's cadets and employees were recently visited by the Alaxan team for the "Alis Aray sa Hanapbuhay" activity. The symposium is very appropriate to the PMA cadets who regularly experience different types of body pain brought about by the rigid training required by the academy.

A similar symposium was also conducted on the grounds of the Western Police District in United Nations Ave., with more than 300 of Manila's crime busters attending the activity. These men and women in uniform are among the millions of Filipinos who consider body pain as part of their everyday lives.

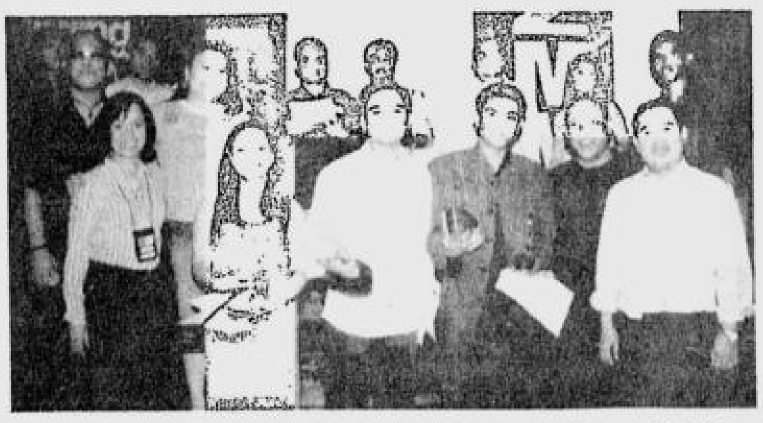
Apart from them, Alaxan has also conducted several similar activities in different areas hitting more than 5,000 employees and workers to date. Recently, the Alaxan team was spotted in Ginebra San Miguel Plant in Cabuyao, Toyota Motor Phils in Sta. Rosa, both in Laguna. They also invaded the construction sites of One Orchard in Libis Quezon City, Serendra properties, Market Market in Fort Bonifacio Global City in Taguig and ABS-CBN in Quezon City.

The free symposium aims to educate and empower the Filipino workers from different industries by giving them useful tips and information about pain management. The symposiums are being conducted in different industries in Greater Manila Area and are set to run for the entire year.

"Alis aray sa Hanapbuhay " is a break away from the usual monotonous symposium because the activity was elevated to higher level by incorporating informative games like the "Alaxan No-Pain Billiard Challenge" and "Alaxan Challenge Board". Both games brought fun and excitement to the attendees which also helped them understand more about pain and how to manage it.

The Alaxan team headed by its professional marketing group's Rodel Magsalin, Liel Dizon and Lannie Barrido, invited medical experts Dr. Richard Cabrera III and Dr. Mona Dimacangan who shared their time and expertise in the activity. One of the highlights is the open forum were the medical experts address their concerns. It is followed by a free one-on-one medical consultation. All employees also received product samples from Alaxan and special gift packs were given to winners of the different Alaxan games.

SUPERFERRY FETES SINGING MARINERS



SuperFerry recently concluded its 3rd Singing Mariners Competition, a singing contest participated by the company's vessel crew and staff, at the Eva Macapagal Super Terminal in Port Area Manila. This year's grand champion was Alexis Canio of SuperFerry 19. In photo are Catherine Brilleta (2nd runner-up), Alexis Canio (grand champion) and Roderick Estiller (1st runner-up), flanked by DZMM Live hosts, the contest judges and Aboitiz Transport System PR and corporate communications manager Gina Virtusio (extreme left).

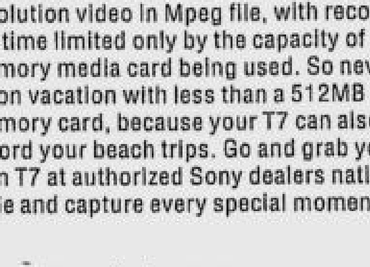
BPI TULONG SA PINOY TO FUND MICRO-ENTERPRISES

The National Federation of Filipino-American Associations (NaFFAA) and the Bank of the Philippine Islands (BPI) have agreed to rally overseas Filipinos to a savings mobilization program under which they are encouraged to open a BPI dollar time deposit account of at least $1,000 each. On its own, the bank will set up lending windows of financial assistance to micro-enterprises. The program is called BPI Tulong sa Pinoy Dollar Account. Shown during the signing of the memorandum of understanding were (from left): BPI VP Raul Dimayuga, SVP Caridad Ibarra, BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura, BPI president and CEO Aurelio Montinola III, NaFFAA chair Loida Nicolas-Lewis, VP and BPI Foundation executive director Roni Tapia-Merk, SVP Lourdes Claravall, SM Violeta Arevalo and Microfinance Council of the Philippines executive director Edgardo Garcia.

Product FILES

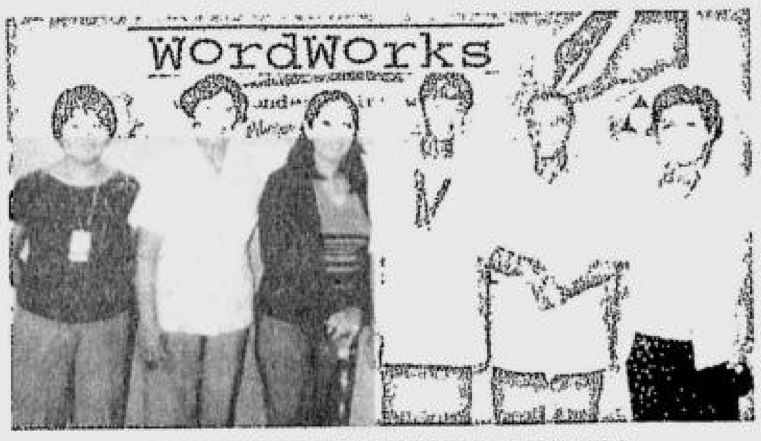
Slim is in with Sony T7

SONY presents the Cyber-shot T7 digital camera. The 5.1 megapixel Cyber-shot T7 is the slimmest at only 9.8 millimeters. Gone indeed are the days when you had to lug around a huge and cumbersome camera, slim is definitely in. Sleek, chic and fashionable, the T7 does not compromise quality in the photos taken. In fact, its superior lenses spell a kaleidoscope of difference. With the Carl Zeiss Vario Tessar lenses, the images you take will be amazingly sharp and rich in color. If there's one more thing you will enjoy most about this camera, it's the large-sized LCD monitor. Perfect for huddling around to see and share those captured images. On top of the fabulous still photos, the T7 can record high-resolution video in Mpeg file, with recording time limited only by the capacity of the memory media card being used. So never go on vacation with less than a 512MB memory card, because your T7 can also record your beach trips. Go and grab your own T7 at authorized Sony dealers nationwide and capture every special moment.



LUFTHANSA TREATS TRAVEL PARTNERS

Lufthansa German Airlines brought its top travel agents to Fort's Manila Speed Zone during its annual thanksgiving party. Participated in by the 20 travel agencies with the most Lufthansa Airlines ticket sales for the year, the get-together had guests learn go-karting basics and race 12 laps of the venue's 800-meter and 14 turns racetrack. Photo shows Lufthansa German Airlines' Minette Tirona-Corpuz; Ann Cruz and Jojo Santos awarding Philscan Travel and Tours' Roberto Sta. Maria who garnered the best time of 1.305 minutes in the racetrack.



NATIONAL WRITING TILT NAMES WINNERS

Rodrigo Casiano Jr. (4th from left) of La Consolacion College-Bacolod City, won first place in category 2 with his entry 'The Benefits of New Technology for Today's Youth' during the Wordworks National Poetry Writing Competition sponsored by Diwa Learning Systems and the leading English magazine for high school, Magica. Also in photo: Tess Moncator, Diwa Learning system specialist (left) and members of the La Consolacion College faculty. Wordworks is a part of Diwa's campaign to encourage budding writers and poets to their craft.

Merchandise export growth slows down

By Michelle V. Remo

THE COUNTRY'S merchandise exports rose 1.1 percent to $3.3 billion in May, slower than the 8.8 percent growth seen in April, as shipments of electronics declined, the National Statistics Office (NSO) said.

Exports in the same month last year amounted to $3.26 billion.

Electronics exports, which accounted for 63.2 percent of total shipments in May, fell 3.8 percent to $2.08 billion from $2.165 billion a year ago.

In the first five months of the year, merchandise exports were up 4.0 percent from a year earlier to $16.05 billion, the NSO said.

The export growth figure in the first five months of the year was way off the 10-percent target set by the government for the whole year.

The National Economic and Development Authority urged the government to encourage diversification in exports, especially in view of the decline in electronics shipments and the fluctuations of demand in the global market.

"It is best to promote other exports to yield a more varied mix, while maintaining the general push for electronic products, which is 63.2 percent of the total merchandise exports," Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Romulo L. Neri said in a memorandum to President Macapagal-Arroyo.

The NSO reported that among the electronics products the country is exporting, only semiconductors (6.8 percent), control instruments (32.9 percent) and medical/industrial instruments (294.3 percent) posted growth. Those that registered decline were electronic data processing machines (-28.8 percent), consumer electronics (-1.4percent), communication radar (-30.2 percent) and automotive electronics (-12.5 percent). Articles of apparel and clothing accessories remained the country's second top dollar earner with a combined share of 5.9 percent and an aggregate receipt of $192.89 million , or 7.4 percent higher than $179.63 million a year ago.

The other top exports for the month were : ignition wiring set and other wiring sets used in vehicles, aircrafts and ships ($61.21 million), Coconut oil ($60.24 million), other products manufactured from materials imported on consignment basis ($44.62 million), petroleum products ($44.14 million), woodcrafts and furniture ($37.37 million), cathodes and sections of cathodes, of refined copper ($34.69 million), metal components ($34.65 million), and bananas ($30.95 million).

The US Semiconductor Industry Alliance blamed the decline in electronics exports to lower prices of DRAM chips and the glut in consumer electronic products in Japan, as evidenced by the drop in the prices of flat screen TVs, digital cameras and DVD players.

Mapfre Asian, I-Gen considering merger

MAPFRE Asian Insurance Corp. , the Philippine non-life insurance subsidiary of Corporacion Mapfre of Spain, and Insular General Insurance (I-Gen), the non-life subsidiary of Insular Life, are considering a possible merger.

The proposed merger is expected to be completed by the end of the year, subject to the approval of the Insurance Commission, the Securities and Exchange Commission, and other regulatory agencies.

The two companies recently signed a memorandum of understanding that would allow them to conduct due diligence.

The merged non-life company will likely have a 60-40 ownership structure, for Corporacion Mapfre and Insular Life, respectively. It will have consolidated assets of approximately P2 billion and equity of P1 billion, and will become a leading player in the Philippine non-life insurance market.

Mapfre Asian ranked 9th in terms of earned premiums in 2004. Its parent company, Mapfre, is an international financial group based in Spain with an asset base of Euro 24.7 billion.

I-Gen, a medium sized non-life company, was established in 1993 as a subsidiary of Insular Life. It has offices in key provincial cities all over the country, riding on the structure of its parent company Insular Life, the third largest life insurance company in the country and the pioneer domestic life insurance company. Insular Life has a network of more than 100 branch offices nationwide, with 2004 consolidated assets of P41.4 billion and net income of P1.06 billion.

MWCI vying for $60-M water management deal in India

By Christine A. Gaylican

MANILA Water Co. Inc. (MWCI), the listed water subsidiary of the Ayala Group, has been pre-qualified to bid for a $60-million water supply and sewerage services management project in New Delhi, India.

MWCI, which currently supplies drinking water to over 5 million customers in the east zone of Metro Manila, teamed up with India's largest engineering and construction firm, Larsen and Toubro Ltd., and the Mahindra Group, one of India's leading conglomerates, to vie for the project.

MWCI will compete with three other international firms in a bidding to be held in October.

The management contract requires the operator to run the water supply and sewerage systems, including meter reading, billing, collection and consumer relations; provide and put in place operational improvements that would reduce water losses, improve metering, billing and collection, and implement energy savings, as well as reliable water supply, and plan and implement a major capital investment program.

"While our resources continue to be focused on the east zone, we recognize the need to expand our business beyond it, especially to areas that will enable us to deliver maximum value to our shareholders," explained Antonino T. Aquino, president of Manila Water.

Aquino said that India's water sector presents opportunities because of its huge market potential. This would be MWCI's second venture in India. The company operates a US$200- million water and waste water facility in the province of Tiripur, also under a management contract and in partnership with the Mahindra Group and British firm United Utilities Ltd Plc.

Manila Water is deep into a major network improvement program in the east zone, which includes the development of new water sources and wastewater projects worth over P20 billion to be spent in the next five years.

Outside the east concession in Manila, the company is eyeing the potential development of water projects in other provinces, including a P2-billion bulk water supply project in Cebu.

BIR misses 6-month target

THE BUREAU of Internal Revenue said it missed its revenue collection target for the first half of the year.

The agency, however, said it was hoping to achieve its full-year goal especially if the government would succeed in convincing the Supreme Court to lift the suspension of the Expanded Value-Added Tax law.

Former Revenue Commissioner Guillermo Parayno Jr., who has just resigned from his post, said in a press briefing yesterday that the revenue agency missed its target for the first semester of the year by less than one percent. This year's six-month collection was, however, much higher than the year-ago level.

The BIR was tasked to collect P265.39 billion, or 15.8 percent higher than the P229.192 billion collected in the same period in 2004.

The actual first half collection figure would be released on July 14, the BIR said.

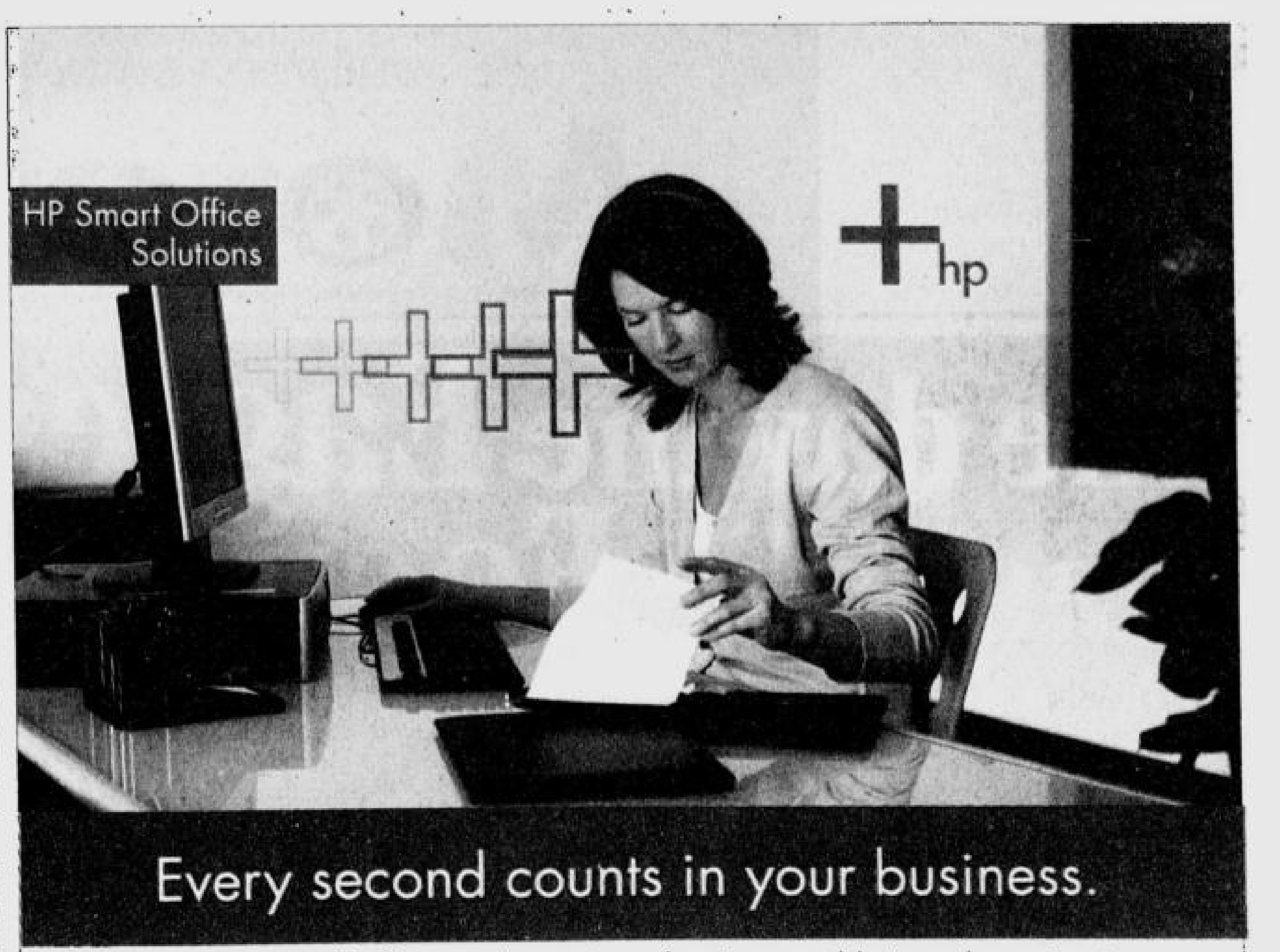
In the meantime, the newly appointed BIR officer-in-charge Jose Mario C. Buñag said that working for the lifting of the suspension of the VAT Law would be a priority of the revenue agency's top agenda under his watch.

Buñag, former deputy commissioner for the BIR's legal and inspection group, said yesterday that the immediate implementation of the VAT Law was crucial in meeting the government's fiscal targets.

He said that the Department of Finance and the BIR were already preparing for their oral arguments for the lifting of the suspension before the Supreme Court on July 14.

"Having the suspension lifted is very critical because VAT is the centerpiece of the fiscal consolidation program," Buñag said in a press briefing.

"We are losing a lot of money each day that it is not being implemented," he said. The DOF earlier estimated that the government was losing lose P130 million to P165 million in potential revenue daily due to the suspension of the VAT Law. *Michelle V. Remo*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PHP98,490

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Complement these HP Desktops with these HP peripherals:

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MOTORING

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The day the Eagles crashed and the Focus flew

By Tessa R. Salazar

IT WAS more of a "Roman massacre" than a classic rivalry.

Ateneo de Manila University and perennial rival De La Salle University were at each other's throats again this overcast Sunday afternoon at the Araneta Coliseum. But instead of breathtaking neck-and-neck battle between two of UAAP's most elite academic institutions, the game turned out to be a shooting gallery for sitting ducks, or Eagles, for that matter.

And the Archers and its horde of cheerers relished every basket that buried their otherwise high-flying nemeses deeper in their graves. La Salle led by as much as 30 at one point before finally settling for an 18-point rout, 78 to 60.

Something special

This writer witnessed the frenzy of the game, and the embarrassing massacre of Ateneo, right at the heart of a sea of green—at the La Salle side of the Coliseum. She was there, though, inadvertently wearing green ("good thing I was in green polo and not blue, or I would have been mangled myself," she would muse afterward), not to watch the game but to wait for a car debut. All because the people at Ford Motors Philippines tipped her that something special was about to happen before the game began.

'Flying' Focus

And happen it did. Though at the onset the audience, which was primed to see blood and gore, was a bit puzzled to find their favorite opening game so rudely interrupted by a large object covered in a veil being wheeled into the center of the hardcourt.

Things got a lot stranger when the white veil was removed from the Ford Focus. As soon as the silver Focus was revealed, it started to float and sway in mid-air. Naturally, the boisterous crowd of 17,000 shouted in awe. Does that thing really fly?

But of course, it did. The reality however, is that the Focus isn't the final answer to Metro Manila's horrendous traffic problem and it doesn't really fly. Only this one did—for shock marketing value. Some spectators could see small propellers under the body of the car, which was remotely controlled by German engineers at ground level.

When this writer asked Ford's Hazel Ludovice for an interview with the sly and ingenious Germans, she said they had to leave immediately for another country in the Asia-Pacific to conquer more would-be Focus fans.

Long before the Ford Focus literally learned to fly, it was already soaring high and scoring points with its market.

Various awards

After it was first launched in 1999, it subsequently won 78 awards. Some of them were the Car of the Year for 1999 from the Danish Association of Motoring Journalists, Pan-European European car of the year 1999, Car of the Year 2000 by the Automotive Journalists Association Canada, and the UK Autocar's Lifetime Achievement Award in November 2003.

It was also among Car and Driver Magazine's 10 best of 2000, Popular Mechanics' "Best of What's New" and Automobile Magazine's Automobile of the Year.

And now the Focus may have gained the distinction of being the very first "flying" car launched in a UAAP game.

Signaling arrival of Focus

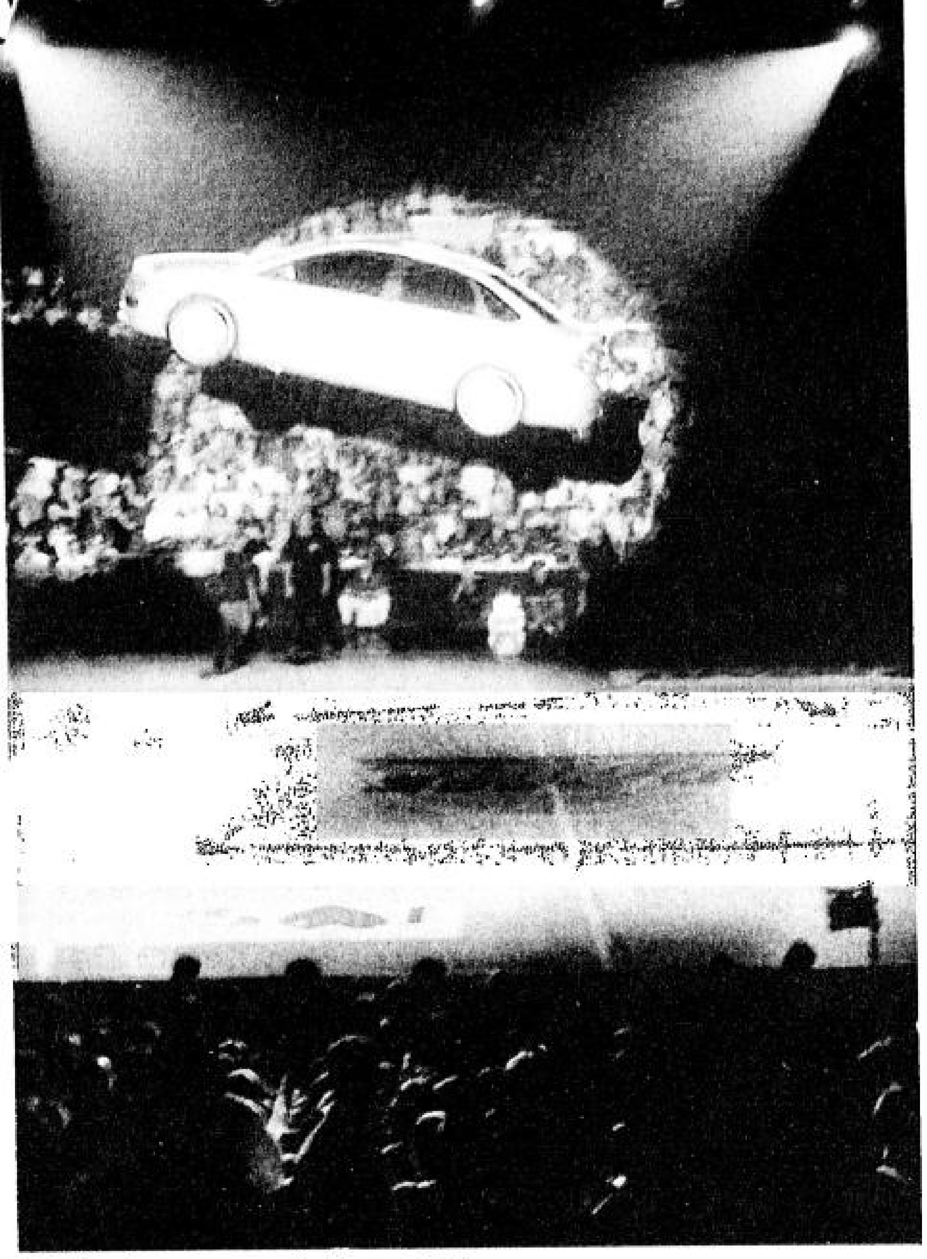
"We are very excited to roll out the Ford Focus. We know that this is one of the vehicles Filipinos have been waiting for. We staged this preview event to intensify the awareness and signal the arrival of the Focus in the market by around August," said Luie Dy Buncio, VP for sales and marketing.

Dy Buncio added that it is the must-have car of the season and would consequently set "the benchmark for superior driving dynamics in the compact car segment."

"The Focus is actually Ford's second generation of 'flying Fords.' It derived its aerial abilities from its European predecessor, the 1959 to '67 105e Ford Anglia, to the delight of Harry Potter fans whose sixth book is scheduled to hit the bookstores soon," said Alvin Uy, a motoring writer who also witnessed the flying phenomenon at the Araneta Coliseum. Uy is a classic car enthusiast whose son is a Harry Potter fan.

Motoring enthusiasts and would-be car owners can have the chance to test-drive the Focus—the rolling ones and not the flying one—from July 22 to 24 at the NBC Tent at the Fort.

The latest Ford marketing gimmick at the Araneta Coliseum should be groundbreaking, but it does have its risks. Some time from now, we might see more La Sallites driving the focus than Ateneans—all because first impressions happened inside two opposing situations: one having a game to remember, and the other playing a game to forget.



FLYING phenomenon at the Araneta Coliseum

ALVIN UY

Hail Honda!

FULL TANK

Al Mendoza

HONDA has emerged stronger, bigger and more respectable than ever before. By admitting a manufacturing error, Honda has stood 10 feet tall, so to speak.

The Good Book says truth shall set us free.

How true.

Honda is now freed from the dark path of profit more than guilt. It has unshackled itself from a mere profit-oriented animal to a capitalist with a conscience.

By admitting a defect in its Civic, Honda was "man enough" to face up to the challenge. It is not shirking, will never shirk, from its sworn duty to have the safety of its customers as its guiding principle at all times.

Whereas other might have elected to keep quiet, it is not to be so with Honda. It did the honorable thing every honest man on this planet must do when confronted with such a crisis of gargantuan magnitude: Admit the mistake, even at the cost of billions of pesos.

Honda owners have queued for the necessary repairs at Honda assembly plants. I have yet to hear of a bickering, a whimper even, attending every visit by a Civic owner to a Honda service shop.

I was told many of them, if not all of them, are just too happy to have acquired their units from a company not afraid to lose face if only to prove it will never compromise the safety of life and limb of its patrons.

Here's to a car company that will stand up to the rights and security of its customers, no matter the costs.

* * *

Have you heard of the new Hiace Commuter?

If you haven't, go check it out. I heard it's a great improvement from the old model.

Launched in January, this Toyota model has been drawing raves from the so-called discriminating pack of car buffs from Metro Manila, including Vernon B. Sarne. (Does that B stand for Beatle?)

The Toyota Motor Philippines, through TMP's Elijah Sue Marcial, said the new Hiace is packaged with an entirely new concept that combines large cargo space for functionality, a unique styling that gives an advanced powerful look, and a driving performance, which incorporates a Direct Injection four-stroke Common Rail Diesel Engine (D-4D).

"Further," said Elijah, Ariel de Jesus' most trusted lieutenant these days, "the new Hiace Commuter raises the standard in the utility van segment by providing customers with an evolution of functions: cargo, capacity, durability, reliability and economy."

No wonder Vernon B. Sarne, motoring editor of another daily, calls it "the van for every magical mystery tour," which is an oblique way to liken the Hiace Commuter, priced at a little over P1 million, to a ride fit for the Beatles song "Magical Mystery Tour."

I wish to have it driven soon and treat myself to a tour as mysterious as the one taken recently by GMA inside the Palace.

Okay with you, Danny "Sir John" Isla?

* * *

I quote some excerpts from Stephen J. Dubner and Steven D. Levitt of the New York Times on the safety of car seats:

On a recent Monday morning, nearly 20 police officers gathered in Clarkstown, NY, for a four-day seminar. They had assembled to fight one of modernity's great scourges: child deaths in motor-vehicle crashes. Each officer was given a 345-page training manual issued by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). At seminar's end, each would be certified as a "child passenger safety technician," which primarily means that they would be experts in the installation and use of child car seats.

Why does it take four days to learn about car seats?

Because any given seat is a tangle of straps, tethers and harnesses built by one of dozens of manufacturers whose products must be secured by the diverse seatbelt configurations of any passenger vehicle sold in the United States. According to the NHTSA manual, more than 80 percent of car seats are improperly installed.

They certainly have the hallmarks of an effective piece of safety equipment: big and bulky, federally regulated, hard to install and expensive. (You can easily spend $200 on a car seat.)

In America today, motor-vehicle crashes are still the top killer among children from 2 to 14.

But one compelling statistic: "Car seats are 54 percent effective in reducing deaths for children ages 1 to 4 in passenger cars."

Is it possible that seatbelts might afford them the same protection as car seats?

Among children 2 and older, the death rate is no lower for those traveling in any kind of car seat than for those wearing seat belts.

In recent crashes and old ones, in big vehicles and small, in one-car crashes and multiple-vehicle crashes, there is no evidence that car seats do a better job than seat belts in saving the lives of children older than 2.

The real answer to why child auto fatalities have been falling seems to be that more and more children are restrained in some way. Many of them happen to be restrained in car seats, since that is what the government mandates, but if the government instead mandated proper seatbelt use for children, they would likely do just as well/without the layers of expense, regulation and anxiety associated with car seats.

* * *

QUOTE ME. In our country, the car-seat policy for children does not exist. Only seatbelts are mandatory for everybody as provided for by law. The verdict: There is yet no fool-proof seat for anyone to emerge uninjured in car crashes. Only by driving safely, defensively and not drunk can we minimize, if not lick, fatal road accidents.

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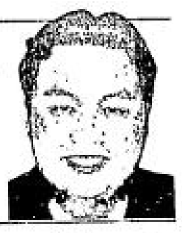


Andre Palma

WHEN news of a small, sporty production Volvo hatchback began to circulate in the international motoring press, I did what any curious motoring hack would do; I scrambled for an Internet connection and scoured the Web for bits and bytes of information.

My research about the Volvo C30, the sport hatch announced at the 2005 North American International Auto Show (Naias), began last January with unbridled fervor and gusto. All the public got from Volvo at Naias was a 15-second short feature, mostly of light and shadow, but heavy on the dramatic lines that were purported to belong to the "smallest current production Volvo."

Six months later and it seems that the manufacturer has kept information about the car at a low, almost ambient, level. Only two facts were officially released about the car: first, it would be based on the current P1 platform of the S40/V50; and, second, the overall length would be about 8 inches shorter than the S40's.

Traced to 2 concept cars

Sources have conjectured that the overall design and execution of the baby Volvo could be traced to two previous concept cars: the wild 2001 SSC (Safety Concept Car) and the charming 2005 3CC emission technology and design test bed. The car's leads have now gone dry so let's see what we have to work with. Engines will probably be those that are used by its brethren, the S40 sedan and the V50 wagon. In Europe, that translates into anything from a no frills 1.6-liter diesel four-cylinder to full on T5 fireworks. Can you imagine a small hatch with a 2.5-liter, 220 bhp, five-cylinder, 20 valver with turbo? The S40 T5 pulls to 100 km per hour (kph) in under seven seconds; a C30 T5, if we are ever blessed with one, will most likely do so closer to six.

Further daydreaming will lead to the "R proposition," and the insane and unlikely notion that the 300 bhp turbo engines that power the V70R and S60R might find its way into engine bay of the tiny hatch. Add to that the Haldex four-wheel drive that is used by other cars in the same P1 Platform family (like the V50 T5 AWD and the rumor-mill Ford Focus RS 05 and Mazdaspeed 3 twins) and you have a Volvo with true provincial B-road (barangay road) ability.

Safety will follow as a result of the SSC lineage of the car. It seems that the "more airbags than passengers" philosophy is standard Volvo fare these days. The current P1s are equipped with six bags, despite only having space for five adults. A pundit quipped that the extra crash bag is for the V50 wagon's inevitable sixth passenger: a Golden Retriever. I tend to agree with that line of thinking, and in any case more is better. The S40 scores a 5 out of 5 in the Euro NCAP demolition tests translating into very little cabin intrusion in the event of a crash. Given the smaller size and lighter weight of the derived C30, it will probably get a 4/5 rating, which is completely respectable as its larger stable mates—the S60, V70 and S80—have to live with this "lower" rating.

Environmental impact

The most obvious contribution of the 3CC to the C30 is visual in nature. Comparing the blurry video captures at Naias to the lines of the evolutionary forebear will confirm this. Despite the attractive coach work, the true worth of the 3CC concept lies underneath the hood and its low impact to the environment.

The concept was entered in the 7th annual Michelin Challenge Bibendum, where the green 3CC won "Best Design" laurels. The contest pits alternative-fuel concept vehicles against one another in an annual competition that challenges manufacturers to find new greener ways of motoring.

One of the highlights of the Challenge vehicle is its PremAir system that removes ozone from the oxygen that the car uses for combustion, making it a moving pollution vacuum. The car also qualified as a PZEV or partial zero emission vehicle, meaning it is one of the cleanest-burning vehicles of any kind regardless of their requirement for gasoline.

Flexibility

A modular engine bay will allow the Volvo 3CC to conform to a wide variety of engine applications, giving it the flexibility to meet the uncertain power source requirements of the future, whether it calls for gasoline, diesel, hybrid, electric or biofuel engines. Though these features will unlikely see production in the scheduled late-2006 debut of the C30, they hint at the way we will all eventually have to motor in the future.

In the end, we will still have to wait a little over a year for the production version of the C30. Whatever the final list of kit this baby Volvo comes with, it will, at the very least, broaden the base for "entry level" premium vehicles.

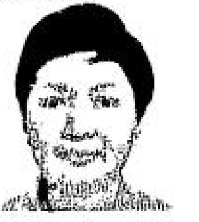
It is very hard to predict the future pricing of this car but given the vehicles it is lined up against in the European market, I would say the C30 will be priced somewhere in between a VW Golf and an Audi A3. Philippine pricing will depend on many factors, none of which can be tackled appropriately by a mere motoring column.

Hopefully, the C30 is all that it is projected to be; an answer for our need to drive dynamically, motor in safety and consume responsibly. I'll keep my fingers crossed for all of us.

Used car imports case in limbo

WITH THE PRESIDENCY of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo in danger of collapsing, what will happen to the case against the importation of used motor vehicles?

ON THE ROAD



Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

The Philippine automotive industry is probably on tenterhooks wondering who the next President will be—should GMA fall from power—and whether the new leadership will support the industry's struggle versus used car imports.

The Chamber of Automotive Manufacturers of the Philippines Inc. (Campi), Truck Manufacturers Association of the Philippines (TMAP), Motor Vehicles Parts Manufacturers Association of the Philippines and other organizations active in the industry claim that used motor vehicles imported from Japan, South Korea and other countries cut into their sales and impede their growth, if not threaten their survival.

Campi et al., together with consumer advocates, also point out that used right-hand-drive vehicles converted to left-hand-drive are unsafe and violate the Clean Air Act.

Setback

Only last month, Campi et al. suffered another setback when the Court of Appeals upheld its Feb. 14, 2005 decision declaring as unconstitutional and illegal Executive Order 156 issued by President Arroyo banning the importation of used motor vehicles into the Philippines.

Trade Secretary Juan B. Santos, who resigned last Friday together with six other Cabinet members, had appealed the February CA ruling which upheld a lower court's decision in Olongapo City.

During their terms of office, Santos, Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima and Customs Commissioner Alberto Lina sought to stem the flood of used motor vehicles entering the country through the Subic Bay Freeport. Purisima, who preceded Santos at Trade before accepting the top post at Finance, backed the local assemblers' moves to stay competitive while Lina issued a memo banning the unloading of used right-hand-drive motor vehicles at sea ports and airports.

Last May, Santos said the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) will not allow the entry of used motor vehicles through the Bataan Technology Park Inc. (BTPI), which is under the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA) and thus has free port status. Santos issued the statement after the Joint Foreign Chambers of Commerce strongly protested moves to allow BTPI to legitimize the importation and reconditioning of used cars. There were reports that BTPI officials were issuing import permits for used vehicles because SBMA had stopped issuing them pending the CA's resolution of the DTI's appeal for reconsideration of its February 2005 decision.

Since all three—Purisima, Santos and Lina—quit their government positions last Friday, the case versus used car imports may now be in limbo.

The Motor Vehicle Importers Association (MVIA) of Subic Bay Freeport Inc. has successfully countered every move of the government to restrict the imported used car trade. When GMA signed EO 156 on Dec. 12, 2004 banning the importation of all types of used motor vehicles except under certain conditions, the MVIA filed a petition before the Third Judicial Region Branch 72 of Olongapo City for prohibition and injunction—and got it on Jan. 21, 2005.

Another TRO

When the DTI imposed a P500,000 additional surcharge for every imported used vehicle, the MVIA contested it and won another temporary restraining order.

The Feb. 14, 2005 CA ruling upholding the Olongapo City court's decision should have been a signal victory for the MVIA for it meant that the SBMA would have to resume issuing import permits. However, Malacañang forestalled that by filing an appeal.

And now that the CA has junked the appeal, Trade Undersecretary Elmer Hernandez, concurrently managing director of the Board of Investments, announced that the case will be elevated to the Supreme Court. In the meantime, the government can continue enforcing EO 156 prohibiting the importation of used vehicles.

Last month, a Japanese car manufacturing executive proposed a solution to the used car imports problem roiling the Philippine automotive industry. Toyota Motor Corp. general manager for Asia, Oceania and the Middle East Yasuhiro Yomoda suggested that the Japanese government require Japanese used motor vehicle exporters to prove that the vehicles they plan to export comply with all safety and environmental standards. Only after the exporters prove this will they be issued certificates allowing them to export the vehicles out of Japan.

The Philippine government will have to do its share, however, by requiring the certificates before allowing used Japanese vehicles to enter the country.

* * *

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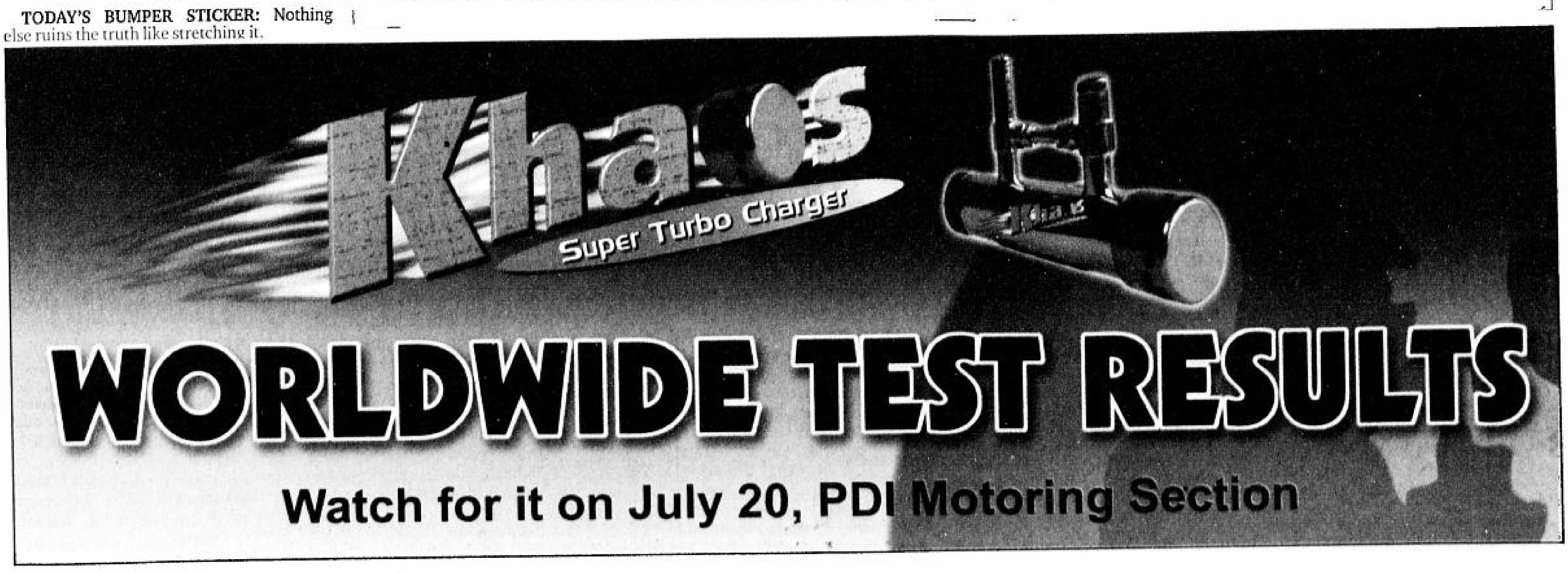

Petron cited for good corporate governance

UNDERSCORING efforts to improve its corporate governance practices, industry leader Petron Corp was recently cited by the Institute of Corporate Directors (ICD) as one of the Best Governed Listed Companies in the Philippines. Petron was recognized for its corporate governance based on the following criteria: 1) rights of shareholders; 2) equity of shareholders; 3) role of stakeholders; 4) disclosure and transparency; and 5) board responsibility.

PETRON chair Nicasio I. Alcantara

The ICD is an international organization composed of highly reputable corporate directors that advocates corporate governance practices that are in line with global standards.

"We have always believed that good corporate governance is essential to our success since it has an impact on market confidence as well as company performance. A well-run and transparent company can produce more value for its stakeholders," Petron chair Nicasio I. Alcantara said.

The ICD adopted the Corporate Governance Scorecard that is being used in Thailand, Hong Kong and most recently, China. 49 companies listed in the Philippine Stock Exchange, which account for nearly 90 percent of total market capitalization, were rated by the ICD. The scorecard used in the Philippines used the "person on the street" approach which means that only information available to an ordinary person will be used to generate a score. The rating process involved two independent rating rounds and the results were checked for consistency before the final scores were determined.

Petron was one of four listed companies that ended up with top ratings.

"We define leadership not only in terms of market share or revenue but also in areas such as governance, social responsibility and transparency. It is our duty to all our stakeholders that we continue to adopt best practices in corporate governance to ensure sustainable growth," Alcantara concluded.

20 percent of Petron shares are held by roughly 200,000 investors. The Philippine government, through the Philippine National Oil Company (PNOC), and Saudi Aramco each have a 40-percent stake in Petron.

Security Bank wins product award at Asian Banking Award 2005

SECURITY Bank received an international recognition for product innovation when the prestigious Asian Banking Awards 2005 conferred "The Most Outstanding Product Award" in the Fund Sourcing Project Category for the Bank's Secure Dollar Optima product, besting over 118 entries from 48 banks in 16 countries in the Asia Pacific region.

The program recognizes and honors banks in Asia that carry out best banking practices and has become the premier banking awards program for the Asia-Pacific region. The recognition is given to banks that have implemented an enhanced, outstanding and innovative product, service, project or program during the previous year.

SHOWN are Security Bank president and chief executive officer Alberto S. Villarosa (3rd from right) and other bank executives, from left, senior vice president for treasury group Roberto Reyes, product manager Eunice Andrea Balagtas, AVP-corporate communications head Rica B. Peñalosa and first vice president for Congenerics Carlos M. Borromeo during the awards night at the Asian Banker's Congress (APBC) held in Manila attended by hundreds of bankers, industry experts, government and business leaders and media to honor Asia's Best Banking Practices.

BLIMS FINE FURNITURE'S 'FUSIONTRENDS' LIFESTYLE EXHIBIT

Blims, the country's trendsetter in the art of fine furniture, recently opened its FusionTrends Lifestyle Exhibit at the Ayala Mall, Glorietta 3. It runs until July 15. The creative fusion of traditional and modern designs, classic trends and fresh concepts and indigenous and space age materials aptly describes FusionTrends. The eight featured vignettes, created by the design faculty of the Philippine School of Interior Design (PSID), represent the different lifestyles and readers of Mega Magazines and Publications Inc (MMPI). Shown during the ceremonial ribbon-cutting are, from left, Carrie Lim, Blims Fine Furniture executive vice president; Kulthorn Silapabanleng, CEO, Scandinavian Living; Angelo Valenton, general manager, Philips Electronics Philippines; Thai Ambassador to the Philippines Asha Dvitiyananda; Sari Yap, president and CEO of MMPI; Paulo Alcazaren, editor in chief of My Home and Blu Print Magazines; and Eggarat Wongcharit, designer of Crafactor. FusionTrends is being presented by Blims Fine Furniture in cooperation with Philips, My Home and Blu Print; Mega Magazines & Publications, Inc.; BPI Express Credit; Boysen and PSID. Other exhibit partners are Krups, Atmosfera, Cereo Candle Exchange and Selco Enterprises.

DUSIT HOTEL HOSTS 1ST SUMMIT ON WOMEN AND TECHNOLOGY

Dusit Hotel Nikko will be the site of the 1st Philippine Summit on Women and Technology organized by the Women's Business Council Philippines (WBCP) and Information Technology Association of the Philippines (Itap). Signing the Memorandum of Agreement are (from left): Kathleen Kho, treasurer, Itap; Dittas Añonuevo-Formoso, president, Itap; Evelyn Singson, trustee treasurer, WBCP, and Imelda Nicolas, president, WBCP. The conference will hold a series of panel discussions and presentations recognizing the role of women in the development of local economy and how technology contributes to a woman's personal and professional advancement. The event will be held July 14 at the Grand Ballroom of Dusit Hotel Nikko in Makati City. For more information, call Salt and Light Ventures Inc and ask for Gina Meneses at 830-2191, 813-2732 or 813-2703.

BITS Clips

MRI blessing at CMC

CAPITOL Medical Center (CMC), on its 35th year of excellence and quality health care service, in partnership with GSIS, offers the latest technology in Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) solutions, Hitachi Aperto 0.4Tesla. CMC, regarded as one of the most respected hospitals in the country, will inaugurate its fully equipped MRI Section on July 14. To open the traditional ribbon cutting ceremony is Winston F. Garcia, GSIS president, together with top executives of CMC and its group of doctors. With the acquisition of this brand new and state-of-the-art Premium Open-Type MRI, CMC will continue its mission to the Filipino people of providing high-quality health care services. CMC is located along Quezon Avenue corner Sct. Magbanua, Quezon City.

'Color My World'

IN CELEBRATION of the National Disability and Rehabilitation Month, Allergan (maker of Botox) will host the "Color My World", a lay forum on the management of Cerebral Palsy (July 13) and post-stroke patients (July 20). It will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 12 noon at the Main Conference (Department of Rehabilitation), UP-PGH, Taft, Manila. The objective of this forum is to provide awareness about a treatment that will improve the quality of life for patients afflicted with cerebral palsy and stroke. Registration is free. For your inquiries and registration, call 845-1324 or text 0920-9221582 and look for Sweet.

Simulated shooting

THE 2005 Defense and Sporting Arms Show features for the first time a practical shooting simulation to attract more youngsters to engage in the sport. The shooting simulation places the shooter in an actual scenario where targets in the form of silhouettes "pop up." The demonstration will use wax bullets instead of real bullets and plywood targets instead of steel. Afad has already sought clearance from authorities to address safety concerns. The 2005 Defense and Sporting Arms Show with the theme "Aiming for Peace in the Community" will be held from July 14 to 18 at the Megatrade Hall of SM Megamall. Apart from promoting responsible gun ownership through gun safety and defense tactics seminars, the gun show features over 35 companies showcasing the latest and most popular firearms and ammunition in the country. For details, call Elvie Maghinang at 6718381 to 82.

Int'l pediatric neurosurgery meet

THE ACADEMY of Filipino Neurosurgeons has been granted by the International Society for Pediatric Neurosurgery to host the 3rd Southeast Asian Educational Course in Pediatric Neurosurgery from July 14 to 16 at the Philippine Children's Medical Center. The course is designed for neurosurgeons and related specialists with topics ranging from Basic Neurosciences to Updates in Management of common conditions that afflict the child's central nervous system. Respected pediatric neurosurgeons Drs. Edgardo Schijman of Argentina, Rick Abbott from New York, Enrique Ventureyra from Canada, Caneezio di Rocco and Carlo Maza from Italy, and Tai Tong Wong from Taiwan will discuss interesting topics. Interested parties can call Dr. Gerardo Legaspi of UP-PGH at 524-2338 or telefax 526-3717.

Pre-school training

THE CENTER for Human Research and Development Foundation Inc, in cooperation with the Association of Booksellers for the Academe and the Professions (Abap) will hold a national seminar-workshop on "Making Pre-School Training and Learning Fun Again" on July 14 and 15 at the Philippine Business for Social Progress Building, Real corner Magallanes Streets, Intramuros, Manila. Resource speaker is Dorothy Huang-Pasia who has been a pre-school teacher for 13 years in Xavier School, Greenhills. For inquiries, call 927-9858.

NBS' 'Iskulakbay'

NATIONAL Book Store welcomes the school year with the "Iskulakbay" promo. You can own one of six Honda Jazz and give P25,000 worth of National Book Store gift certificates to your favorite school. Buy any of the specially marked school supplies, books and educational materials and get a raffle coupon with every P300 single or accumulated purchase from now until July 15.

Dero Showminar at Ricco Renzo

DEPRESSED over the hard, uncertain times? Composer, columnist and life-enhance coach Dero Pedero presents two empowering seminars that will help shift your attitude from helpless despair to enthusiastic hope. The Ricco Renzo Galleries presents Pedero's "Make Your Impossible Dreams Come True!", a highly entertaining and motivating success seminar on July 13, Wednesday and "Money, Money! Secret Principles of Money & Prosperity", a powerful and enlightening prosperity seminar on July 14. The two-part seminar starts from 6 p.m. until 9 p.m. Ricco Renzo Galleries & Cafe is located at the ground floor, LRI Business Plaza, 210 N. Garcia Street (formerly Reposo near St. Andrew's Church and Alliance Française), Bel Air II, Makati City. For details, text or call 898-2545, 0917-3299462.

Global opportunities galore

IF YOU are looking for a master franchise, or interested to expand nationally or internationally, or an owner of a new concept with an opportunity to grow, the place to go is Franchise 2005, the Philippine International Franchise Conference and Expo (Pifce) this coming July 14 to 17 at the Westin Philippine Plaza and the World Trade Center.

More than a marketing event, Franchise 2005 is a corporate responsibility to promote and grow the Philippine franchising industry both locally and internationally.

This was how Samie Lim, chair emeritus of the Philippine Franchise Association (PFA) describes the forthcoming Pifce, so far the biggest and the most comprehensive franchise event in the country today.

With this year's theme "Achieve Dreams and Beyond", Franchise 2005 includes plenary sessions, presentations and roundtable discussion on the different aspects of franchising including its success formula, latest trends and updates. Pifce this year aims to equal, if not surpass, last year's achievement which generated around $5.5 million worth of new businesses and created thousands of jobs. Last year's event drew more than 15,000 visitors who came to the 12th Pifce expo.

Most of the visitors who come to the show expect to find out more about franchising, look for new franchise concepts and what these can offer in terms of franchise rights and business opportunities, Lim added. For more than 10 years, the country's biggest and premier franchise show has successfully provided an opportunity for information and in promoting and testing new formulas. Now bigger and better, the 2005 Pifce presents prospective business owners not only with an amazing diversity of business concepts to choose from, but also provides a forum for meeting in person with company owners and, in some cases, existing franchise owners.

Pifce is being staged annually to promote and showcase PFA's members and to showcase new concepts to would-be entrepreneurs. At the Exhibit hall at the World Trade Center from July 15 to 17, visitors will find well-known names such as Max's, Reyes Haircutters, Chowking, Greenwich, Kamiseta, Informatics, to name a few. One will also find many of the newest and exciting franchises such as Siopao Maker, Feet for Us, Tropical Souvenirs, Ribbon Fries, and many more at the Incubation Center, ready to be introduced. In total, there are franchises that suit almost everyone's experience, interest and investment level.

At the conference site at the Westin Philippine Plaza, Lim enjoins the public to take advantage of the exciting and powerhouse speakers who will talk on topics that will deal with critical global issues that current franchisors and potential franchisors and franchisees need to know to become globally competitive. There is a wealth of educational materials about franchising that will be available on these dates.

As the pioneer franchise organization in the country, Lim notes of PFA's role in making franchising as a tool for national development. With the global challenges and competition faced by many, global networking has become imperative. Thus, PFA has boldly taken the initiative to gather and bring together the best of local and international franchise experts where every Filipino, big or small, who has the desire to know more about franchising, can learn from. Franchise 2005 is for all of us Filipinos, Lim added.

Franchise 2005 will be participated in at the international pavilion by the UK Trade & Investment; Department of Export Promotion-Ministry of Commerce, Royal Thai Embassy; Malaysia External Trade Development Corp (Matrade); PRISM; PACT; Emerge; USAid.

Co-presented by PLDT Business Solutions, Franchise 2005 is a joint undertaking with the Department of Trade and Industry, and supported by Gold sponsors Nestlé Foodservices, Montanara, and Francorp; Silver sponsors Goldilocks, Greenwich, Julie's Bakeshop, Max's Franchising, Chowking, Quali Plus International, Globe Handyphone, and San Miguel Great Foods Solutions. Participating malls include the Araneta Center, Inc, Shangri-la Plaza, and the Ayala Center. Media partners include GMA Channel 7; Entrepreneur Philippines, RJ 100, Wave 89.1, and Energy FM91.5

For more details about Franchise 2005, call the PFA secretariat at 687-03065 up to 67 or e-mail pfa@nwave.net.

39 years of strength, diversity

WHEN the province of South Cotabato was created under RA 4849 on July 18, 1966, few knew what the future would hold or what the newly founded province.

Now, it is a thriving province of 773,900 people speaking five distinct tongues and scattered across 3,706 square km of fertile, scenic land—with sights such as the pineapple-wreathed cone of Mt. Matutum, and the paradise known as Lake Holon (Lake Maughan). Like the patient, skilled T'nalak Weavers of the province, the people of South Cotabato have taken their diverse yet distinct regional and ethnic traits, languages, arts and culture, and have woven together a province as sturdy, colorful, and beautiful as any of their abaca tapestries.

"The province that the people have woven is strong indeed, and it is this strength in spite of adversity which will be celebrated with the T'nalak Festival 2005 from July 14 to 18," Governor Daisy Fuentes said. The theme of the festival is "Transcending Challenges, Optimizing Progress."

Activities began with the Agri-Trade Fair, Technology & Tourism Expo July 11. A Thanksgiving Mass is to be held today, 9 a.m. at the South Cotabato Gym. On July 14, 4 a.m. a Dayana (morning band) launches the festival around the capital Koronadal City, followed by a Civic Military Parade, Drum & Lyre & Float Competition on and culminating with a Battle of the Bands, Oktoberfest at 7 p.m. Activities will be held such as Dance Sports at the South Cotabato Gym (3 p.m. July 15), the Search for Mutya ng South beauty pageant (7 p.m. July 16), the Motocross & Flat Track Competition (7 a.m. July 17), and the National Modern Dance Competition (7 p.m. July 17). July 18, kicks off with the famous T'nalak Parade (Madal Be' Lan) followed by an anniversary program (9 a.m.) and ending in a Fellowship Night (7 p.m.) and a Disco sa Kalye at Alunan Avenue (9 p.m.).

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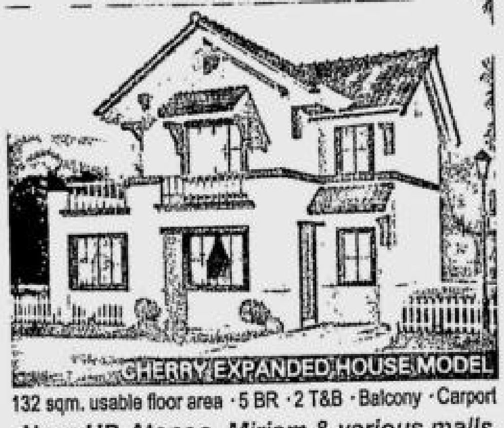

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LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given that the estate of the late **ATTY. JOSE G. GONZALES** has been extrajudicially settled with waiver among his heirs per Doc No. 117, Page No. 24, Book No. VII, Series of 2005, before Atty. Juanito L. Garcia, Notary Public Manila. (PDI - July 6, 13 & 20, 2005)

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT THE ESTATE OF THE LATE ERNESTO A. SORIANO HAS BEEN EXTRA JUDICIALLY SETTLED BY HIS HEIRS ON JUNE 24, 2005, BEFORE NOTARY PUBLIC RYAN ESPINOSA. PER DOC. NO. 358 PAGE 72 BOOK VII SERIES OF 2005 (PDI JUNE 29, JULY 6 & 13, 2005)

PUBLIC NOTICES

NOTICE OF LOSS

Alabang Country Club Cert.# A -1917 issued to Bernardo B. Trinidad was lost. If no contest received new Certificate will be issued. (PDI- July 1, 6, 13, 2005)

LOSS of Ayala Corp. Stck Cert. #4415 for 18,439 shares issued to ANTONIO MA. GUERRERO & /or CONSUELO S. GUERRERO. (PDI - June 29, July 6 & 13, 2005)

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CAREGIVER 5280730

DEP ED MARIKINA CITY
OSEC-DECSB ESP2 - 30123
TCH1 - 48037 47763 47677
47697 47658 47708 31540

NURSE, AGRICULTURAL ENG., INTERNATIONAL COOK, FOREMAN LANDSCAPER 4981172,4981661, 0920-6262141

OFC STF 09159481404 GENESIS

OFFICE STAFF 09192247082 Faye

GLOBAL UNLIMITED INTERNATIONAL MANPOWER, INC.
Logic House Bldg., 1811 Guerrero St., cor. Nakpil Sts., Malate, Manila
POEA License No. 562-LB-120202-R

URGENTLY NEEDED for DUBAI, United Arab Emirates

DUBAI OFFICE
REQUIREMENTS:

8 no. MEP CAD TECHNICIANS
- Be proficient at AutoCAD. Must have previous experience of working on preparation of MEP drawings on international projects/with international companies, 7 years experience.
- Age 30+
- The CAD draughters are to be tested using Consult standard MEP CAD test, should they pass the test then they are suitable to be employed.

Special Skills
- If possible, demonstrable skills in software eg Carrier HAP, HevaComp, AGI32 lighting software etc.

Package: Dhs 5,000 - 6000 gross for arch. CAD technician, air ticket at mobilization and demobilization, 30 calendar days paid annual leave, government insurance
Contract Period: one year, renewable annually

3 no. ELECTRICAL ENGINEERS/4 no MECHANICAL ENGINEERS
- Degree educated. 10 years MEP design experience on large scale international projects/with international companies.
- Work alone and report the Senior MEP Engineer.
- Age 30-45
- Demonstrable skills in software eg Carrier HAP, HevaComp, AGI32 lighting software etc.

Package: DHS 10,000 - 12,000 for Electrical/Mechanical, air ticket at mobilization and demobilization, 30 calendar days paid annual leave, government insurance
Contract Period: one year, renewable annually.

2 no. SENIOR MECH/2 no SENIOR ELECTRICAL ENGINEER
- Degree educated 15 years MEP design experience on large scale international projects/with international companies. Experience in Far East or Middle East required. Excellent ability to communicate both written and oral.
- Use of AutoCAD is preferred. Work alone and report the MEP Manager.
- Age 40+
- Demonstrable excellent skills in software that you and I recognise eg Carrier HAP, HevaComp, AGI32 lighting software etc.

Package: DHS 15,000.00 for Electrical/Mechanical, air ticket at mobilization and demobilization, 30 calendar days paid annual leave, government insurance
Contract Period: - one year, renewable annually

MEP INSPECTOR - 6 no.
- Degree educated 5-10 years experience of inspection of MEP services on international projects/with international companies.
- Must be able to supervise and witness the testing and commissioning of electrical equipment.
- Ability to communicate both written and oral.
- Work alone and report the Senior MEP Inspector.
- Age 30+

Package: DHS 4,000 - 5,000.00 for Electrical/Mechanical, air ticket at mobilization and demobilization, 30 calendar days paid annual leave, government insurance
Contract Period: -one year, renewable annually.

SENIOR MEP INSPECTOR
- Degree educated. 12 years experience of inspection of MEP services on large scale
- International projects/with international companies.
- Must be able to supervise and witness the testing and commissioning of electrical equipment.
- Excellent ability to communicate both written and oral.
- Work alone and report the MEP Inspector Manager.
- Age 40+

Package: DHS 6,000 - 8,000.00 for Electrical/Mechanical, air ticket at mobilization and demobilization, 30 calendar days paid annual leave, government insurance
Contract Period: -one year, renewable annually.

INSPECTOR MANAGER
- Degree educated 20 years experience of inspection of MEP services on large scale
- International projects/with international companies.
- Must be able to supervise and witness the testing and commissioning of electrical equipment
- Excellent ability to communicate both written and oral. Ability to prepare reports and ability in the use of Word, Excel etc.
- Age 45+

Package: DHS 10,000.00 for Electrical/Mechanical, air ticket at mobilization and demobilization, 30 calendar days paid annual leave, government insurance
Contract Period: -one year, renewable annually.

Interested applicants may apply at our Office.
Look for: JOSIE DEONILA
Tel No 526-9112 / 526-9114
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Contract Signing for the ... TransCo's Sub-transmission Assets
National Transmission Corporation

TRANSCO SIGNS DEAL WITH SEZC

IN PURSUIT of its mandate to divest its sub-transmission assets nationwide, the National Transmission Corporation (TransCo) signed a P101.6 million deal with Subic Enerzone Corporation (SEZC) for the first-ever sale of a substation in Luzon. TransCo president Alan T. Ortiz, Ph.D. and SEZC president Jaime Jose Y. Aboitiz (shaking hands) inked the agreement for the sale of TransCo's Subic Substation inside the SBMA complex (inset). SEZC is a subsidiary of the Aboitiz Equity Ventures representing the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority. TransCo VP for HR, admin and finance Alexander B. Cortez (left) and SBMA administrator Alfredo Antonio acted as witnesses to the signing.

INQUIRER CLASSIFIEDS

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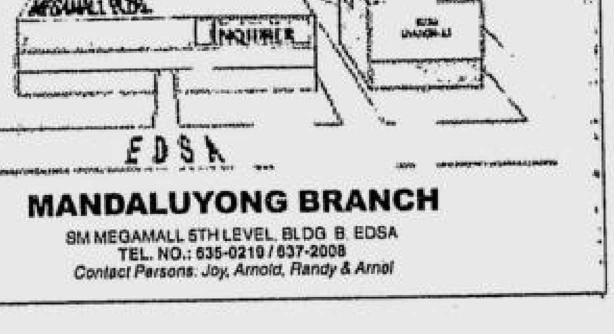


MANDALUYONG BRANCH
SM MEGAMALL 5TH LEVEL, BLDG B, EDSA
TEL. NO.: 635-0219 / 637-2008
Contact Persons: Joy, Arnold, Randy & Arnel

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
NATIONAL HOUSING AUTHORITY

NOTICE OF DISPOSITION

The National Housing Authority is inviting Offers to Purchase/Lease on an "As Is -Where Is" basis, the following properties:

ITEM NO.	DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	BASE PRICE
I. FIRST OFFERING			
LEASE			
001-002	2 commercial lots, with areas of 812 & 813 sq.m. With title	Block 24 Phase II-B Karangalan Village Pasig City	PhP42/sq.m./mo.
SALE			
003-052	50 commercial lots with areas ranging from 18.05 to 257.51 sq.m. With technical descriptions	Phase IV, Pkgs. 9A, 4 & 5 Bagong Silang Resettlement Project Caloocan City	PhP3,040/sq.m. to PhP3,360/sq.m.
053-066	14 commercial lots, lot areas ranging from 50 to 63 sq.m. With Titles	Phase IV, Towerville Resettlement Project San Jose Del Monte City	PhP2,475/sq.m. to PhP2,500/sq.m.
067-070	4 commercial lots, lot areas ranging 74 to 295 sq.m. With technical descriptions	Mayon Vista Hills Subd. Tuburan, Ligao City Albay	PhP1,600/sq.m. to PhP1,785/sq.m.
II. SECOND OFFERING			
SALE			
071	1,113 sq.m. commercial lot With title	Towerville Resettlement Project, San Jose del Monte City	PhP3,000/sq.m. or 3,339,000.00
072	1 foreclosed lot 312 sq.m. with title. Vacant	Brgy. Bulua, Cagayan de Oro City	PhP1,500.00/sq.m. or PhP468,000.00
073	1 foreclosed lot 1,905 sq.m. With tax declaration	Brgy. Natumolan, Tagoloan, Misamis Oriental	PhP200.00/sq.m. or PhP381,000.00
074	2 contiguous lots, with unfinished apartment units. Total area of 687 sq.m., with titles	Governor Alvarez St. Zamboanga City	PhP11,481,200.00
III. NEGOTIATED SALE			
	3 commercial lots with areas ranging from 240 to 317 sq.m. With titles	Phase III-E Bagong Nayon II, Antipolo City	PhP3,500.00/sq.m.
IV. NEGOTIATED LEASE			
	1 Industrial lot with an of 60,000 sq.m. With title	Vitas Industrial Reclamation Area,Tondo, Manila	PhP30/sq.m./mo or PhP1,800,000.00/mo

TERMS:

For properties for lease, a minimum of two (2) months deposit and one (1) month advance shall be tendered on the date of bidding. Lease period shall be for a maximum of fifteen (15) years renewable for another five (5) years at the option of NHA. A Five Percent (5%) escalation rate shall be imposed beginning on the 2nd year of lease and every year thereafter.

A minimum of Ten Percent (10%) deposit shall be tendered on the date of bidding for properties for sale through public bidding and at the time of submission of Letter of Intent for negotiated sale; Options for repayment period are ***Cash, Modified Cash*** (Six (6) equal installments without interest) or ***Installment*** for a maximum period of ***Ten (10) years*** with graduated interest rates.

The Letter of Intent for negotiated sale/lease may be submitted at the Bagong Nayon and Tondo Foreshore Project Offices on the following working day from first publication of this Notice of Disposition.

Bidding Materials can be secured for a non-refundable fee of **PhP200.00** from the ***Commercial/Industrial Bids & Awards Committee (COINBAC) c/o the Commercial & Industrial Estates Department (CIED)***, Second Floor, NHA Main Bldg., Elliptical Road, Quezon City. Bidding Materials can also be secured from the ff. Project Offices:

For **Cagayan de Oro/Misamis Oriental** properties: NHA Cagayan de Oro Project Office, Don Julio Pacana St., Puntod Macabalan, Cagayan de Oro City Contact Person: Engr. Judy Fernandez, Tel .No. 088-8568778.

For **Zamboanga** property: NHA Zamboanga Project Office, NHA Teachers' Village, Brgy. Cabaluan, Zamboanga City. Contact Person: Engr. Al Khwarizima Indanan, Tel. No. 062-2141522

For **Ligao City** property: NHA Ligao City Project Office, 2nd Flr. Quillian Bldg., Ligao City, Albay Contact Person: Engr. Alberto Perfecto, Jr. Tel. Nos. 052-4851626 & 052-4852747

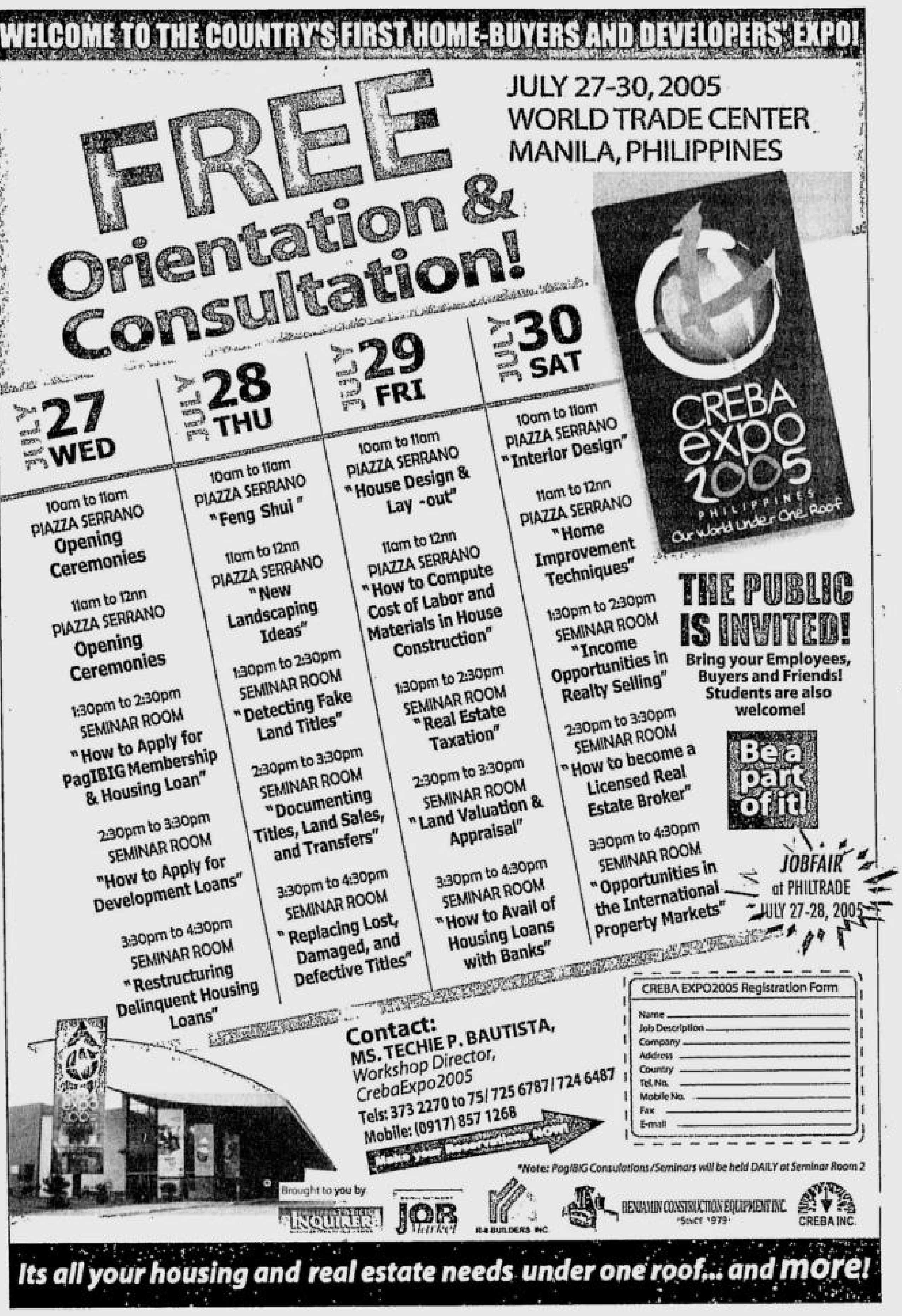
For further inquiry, please contact *Ms. Evelyn V. Ramos/Neri A. Subido* at the following Tel. Nos. of *CIED: (02) 922-3002, (02) 928-4561 local 263 & 264;*

SCHEDULE OF PUBLIC BIDDING	KARANGALAN/ BAGONG SILANG/ TOWERVILLE	CAGAYAN DE ORO/MISAMIS ORIENTAL	ZAMBOANGA	ALBAY
A. Submission of Pre-Qualification Requirements	July 17 to 22 '05 Office Hours, NHA Main Office Elliptical Rd., Diliman, Quezon City	Aug. 8 to 17, '05 Office Hours NHA Cagayan de Oro Project Office	Aug. 15 to 24, '05 Office Hours NHA Zamboanga Project Office	Aug. 29 to Sept. 7, '05 Office Hours NHA Ligao Project Office
B. Pre-Bid Conference	July 19, 2005 10:00 AM Operations Center, 3rd Flr., NHA Main Office	Aug. 17, '05, 10:00 AM NHA Cagayan de Oro Project Office	Aug. 24, '05, 10:00 AM NHA Zamboanga Project Office	Sept. 7, '05, 10:00 AM NHA Ligao Project Office
C. Submission of Sealed Bids	July 26, '05 9:00 AM to 12:00 NN Operations Center	Aug. 19, '05 9:00 AM to 10:00 AM NHA Cagayan de Oro Project Office	Aug. 26, '05 9:00 AM to 10:00 AM NHA Zamboanga Project Office	Sept. 09, '05 9:00 AM to 10:00 AM NHA Ligao Project Office
D. Opening of Sealed Bids	July 26, '05 1:30 PM Operations Center	Aug. 19, '05, 10:15 AM NHA Cagayan de Oro Project Office	Aug 26, '05, 10:15 AM NHA Zamboanga Project Office	Sept. 09, '05, 10:15 AM NHA Ligao Project Office

The AUTHORITY reserves the right to *reject* any or all offers or any part thereof or to *waive* any required formalities and *accept* offers most advantageous to the interest of NHA.

(Sgd.) **JOSEPH PETER S. SISON**
Chairman, COINBAC

(PDI - July 13, 2005)



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JULY 27 WED	JULY 28 THU	JULY 29 FRI	JULY 30 SAT
10am to 11am PIAZZA SERRANO Opening Ceremonies	10am to 11am PIAZZA SERRANO "Feng Shui"	10am to 11am PIAZZA SERRANO "House Design & Lay -out"	10am to 11am PIAZZA SERRANO "Interior Design"
11am to 12nn PIAZZA SERRANO Opening Ceremonies	11am to 12nn PIAZZA SERRANO "New Landscaping Ideas"	11am to 12nn PIAZZA SERRANO "How to Compute Cost of Labor and Materials in House Construction"	11am to 12nn PIAZZA SERRANO "Home Improvement Techniques"
1:30pm to 2:30pm SEMINAR ROOM "How to Apply for PagIBIG Membership & Housing Loan"	1:30pm to 2:30pm SEMINAR ROOM "Detecting Fake Land Titles"	1:30pm to 2:30pm SEMINAR ROOM "Real Estate Taxation"	1:30pm to 2:30pm SEMINAR ROOM "Income Opportunities in Realty Selling"
2:30pm to 3:30pm SEMINAR ROOM "How to Apply for Development Loans"	2:30pm to 3:30pm SEMINAR ROOM "Documenting Titles, Land Sales, and Transfers"	2:30pm to 3:30pm SEMINAR ROOM "Land Valuation & Appraisal"	2:30pm to 3:30pm SEMINAR ROOM "How to become a Licensed Real Estate Broker"
3:30pm to 4:30pm SEMINAR ROOM "Restructuring Delinquent Housing Loans"	3:30pm to 4:30pm SEMINAR ROOM "Replacing Lost, Damaged, and Defective Titles"	3:30pm to 4:30pm SEMINAR ROOM "How to Avail of Housing Loans with Banks"	3:30pm to 4:30pm SEMINAR ROOM "Opportunities in the International Property Markets"

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Tel. Nos. 522-0000; 526-0100 connecting all departments

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP), through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors/contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the projects as stated below:

ITB No.	Item / Description	Approved Budget	Source of Funds
2005-028(2)	Two (2) Years Lease Rental of Thirty Three (33) units Brand New Copier Machine for LBP-HO Units with estimated minimum volume of 5,000 copies/unit/month	P 2,197,800.00	LBP Funds
2005-183	Various Forms for Printing	5,191,590.00	LBP Funds

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last two (2) years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligiblity Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

Bidding of the above requirements is scheduled on **August 3, 2005 at 1:00 p.m.** and the Bid documents may be obtained from the Procurement Division of the General Services Department, 25th Floor, LANDBANK Plaza, M. H. del Pilar corner Dr. Quintos Streets, Malate, Manila, **upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P1,000.00 for each ITB.**

Interested suppliers are requested to attend the Pre-Bid Conference scheduled on **July 21, 2005** at the 25th Floor, Conference Room, LANDBANK Plaza, Malate, Manila.

All particulars relative to **Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post Qualification and Award of Contract** shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of **RA 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations** (IRR).

LANDBANK reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to declare the bidding a failure or waive any required formality therein and to make an award to the bidder whose bid is most advantageous to the Bank.

COMMITTEE ON BIDS AND AWARDS

(PDI–July 13 & 19, 2005)

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

With the expiry of its agency contract, Surex (Sure Express Worldwide), its franchisees and representatives are no longer authorized to accept documents, cargo or money in behalf of 2GO (Abotiz One, Inc.).

(PDI - July 13, 2005)

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

This is to inform the Public that
SMA INT'L. PLACEMENT & PROMOTION, INC.
has a new office address located at Rm. 202 & 203
Krisambet Bldg., 1015 Zobel Roxas St.,
Singalong Malate, Manila
Tel.no. (632) 521-4467

(PDI - July 13, 2005)

CALL POEA

24-HOUR HOTLINES

722-1144 or 722-1155

PRISM
PRIVATE SECTOR MOBILIZATION FOR FAMILY PLANNING

USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

The Private Sector Mobilization for Family Planning (PRISM), a project funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) under contract number 492-C-00-04-00036-00 and implemented by a consortium led by Chemonics International, Inc. is soliciting offers for:

Conduct of a Survey to Determine the Potential for Installing Workplace Family Planning Programs in Call Centers in the Philippines

Background

The PRISM Project supports USAID/Philippines' Strategic Objective 3, *desired family size and improved health sustainably achieved*, focusing on three components: 1) increased **workplace** support for family planning (FP) services and referrals, 2) establishment of viable, mass **market** brands of hormonal contraceptives, and 3) increased business value of FP among **private practice** providers.

The Component 1(Workplace Initiatives) of PRISM aims to increase formal employment sector support for FP service delivery in the workplace. The activities that will be undertaken to accomplish this aim include, among others, the conduct of outreach activities to increase business leaders' public discussion of population and FP issues, increased firms' support for workplace FP programs, the development of cost-effective and sustainable workplace models, and the replication of these models whenever feasible.

The objetive of this procurement is to solicit responsive offers from qualified, responsible Philippine-based research companies/firms, research foundations, or non-government organizations (hereafter referred to as "Offeror") for the conduct of "Survey to Determine the Potential for Installing Workplace Family Planning Programs in Call Centers of the Philippines". The research study aims to gather information of call centers to determine the potential and effective approaches for setting up a workplace family planning program.

Qualification Requirements

- If a non-US or non-Filipino firm is selected for award, ***the firm must meet specific criteria for PRISM to obtain a source and origin waiver from USAID.*** Information on these criteria are available upon request.
- Must have a team of qualified personnel to manage and execute the project; and
- Must be in operation for the past 5 years.

For a copy of the Request for Proposal (RFP), please get in touch with Ms. Vivien S. Cabanban, Subcontracts Specialist at (02) 490-0060 to 65 or 635-2397. You may also email: contracts@prism.org.ph.

The deadline for submission of proposals is on or before 11:00 A.M, Wednesday, August 10, 2005.

Questions on RFP must be submitted on July 21, 2005 by e-mail or fax and will be addressed during the bidders' conference **scheduled on July 26, 2005 from 10:00 am to 11:00 am at the PRISM Office, 23rd Floor, Wynsum Corporate Plaza, 22 F. Ortigas Jr. Road, Ortigas Center, Pasig City.**

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Environment and Natural Resources
ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT BUREAU
DENR Compound, Visayas Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City 1116
Telephone Nos. 925-47-93 to 97
E-mail: emb@emb.gov.ph
Visit us at http://www.emb.gov.ph

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

on the **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)** of
SALCON POWER CORPORATION
located in Naga, Cebu

Notice is hereby given to all parties who wish to give their opinion regarding the 2 X 100 MW COAL FIRED POWER PLANT of SALCON POWER CORPORATION to attend a Public Hearing scheduled on August 6, 2005, 2:00 PM at Naga Sports Center.

This Public Hearing is being conducted in connection with the review of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) of the aforementioned Project by the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

All interested parties who wish to attend or participate in this Public Hearing should first register in person or by mail with the EMB at DENR Compound, Visayas Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City c/o Mr. Rey P. Alcances, EIA Division Chief or with the Environmental Management Bureau Region VII (Banilad, Mandaue City), prior to the said hearing.

Individual and/or organizations may give their opinion in a concise position paper submitted to the EMB/EMB Region VII on or before August 4, 2005.

For more details, please contact the EIA Division of EMB through Engr. Allen B. Villanueva or Ms. Jannish S. Almario at telephone nos. (02) 920-2240 to 41.

(PDI - July 9 & 13, 2005)

Republic of the Philippines
SOCIAL SECURITY COMMISSION
Makati City

TERESITA Q. ARCAINA,
Petitioner,

Versus — SSC CASE NO. 4-15694-04

ALICIA MERCADO and
SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM,
Respondents,
x-----------------------------------x

NOTICE OF RESOLUTION

TO: MS. ALICIA MERCADO

GREETINGS:

Notice is hereby given that on the 22nd day of June 2005, a **RESOLUTION**, consisting of 4 pages, was entered in the above-mentioned case, the dispositive portion of which reads as follows:

WHEREFORE, PREMISES CONSIDERED, this Commission finds, and so holds, that petitioner is the primary beneficiary of the member entitled to the benefit accruing from the death of the latter.

Accordingly, the SSS is hereby ordered in pay the petitioner the lump sum death benefit subject to its existing rules and regulation, and to inform this Commission of its compliance herewith.

SO ORDERED.

SOCIAL SECURITY COMMISSION

(PDI - July 13, 2005)

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OBITUARIES

THE HERITAGE PARK
FORT BONIFACIO
Funeral Home and Crematory
845-2334 to 38; 845-2440

"Even when I walk
through a dark valley,
I feel no harm. For you are
at my side, your rod
and staff give me
courage..."

Psalm 23:4

REBECCA PRIETO INTAL

now peacefully rests in the
infinite Grace & Goodness of our Lord
on the 11th day of July 2005 at the age of 50.

Her bereaved family: husband **Carlito** (†), her loving children **Carla**, **Erica**, **Bianca**, and **Paulo**; her mother **Ramona** and father **Nicolas** (†); her beloved brothers & sisters **Josie**, **Dette**, **Bobby**, **Nicky**, **May** and **Raymund**, other relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Chapel Venice of Loyola Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque.

Interment will be at the Manila Memorial Park, Dasmariñas, Cavite on Sunday, July 17, 2005.

ATTY. EZER YUTUC y RODRIGUEZ

of Bacolor, Pampanga

peacefully joined our Lord on 11 July 2005 at tha age of 75.

His bereaved wife **TOMASA**; daughter **MA. CORITO** & son-in-law **CHRISTIAN**; grandchildren **MAJA**, **DIEGO** and **KIKO**; brother **ERIC**; sister **AURORA** & brother-in-law **RIZAL**; nephews and nieces; relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the House of Many Mansions in McArthur Highway, Angeles City, Pampanga.

Interment will be on **Thursday, 14 July 2005** at the Bacolor Catholic Cemetery in Bacolor, Pampanga after the 9:00 a.m. Mass.

Always caring... **INQUIRER OBITUARIES**
OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS: ❶ Copy of Death Certificate
❷ Any identification document (I.D.)
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and bank-to-bank payments
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CLASSIFIEDS

Pag-IBIG Fund

The Atrium of Makati
Makati Avenue, City of Makati

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

THE RENOVATION OF PUBLIC TOILETS AT THE ATRIUM OF MAKATI CONDOMINIUM BUILDING

The Pag-IBIG Fund, through its Bids and Awards Committee-Civil Works (BAC-CW) intends to apply the sum of P14,641,464.25 being the Approved Budget for Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the Renovation of public toilets at the Atrium of Makati Condominium Building. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.

The Pag-IBIG Fund now calls for the submission of Letters of Intent (LOIs) from potential Bidders to apply for eligibility for the Renovation of public toilets at the Atrium of Makati Condominium Building. Bidders should possess a valid PCAB license applicable to the above type and cost of the contract, have completed a similar contract with a value of at least fifty percent (50%) of the ABC, and meet the other minimum eligibility requirements stated in the Eligibility Documents. Interested Bidders must submit their LOIs on or before 5:00 p.m. of August 2, 2005 to the BAC-CW Secretariat at Room 704, 7/F Atrium of Makati Condominium Building, Makati Avenue, Makati City and secure the Eligibility Documents therefrom. The BAC-CW Secretariat will issue to prospective bidders Eligibility Forms, upon their submission of the LOI, and upon their payment of a non-refundable amount of Five Hundred Pesos (P500.00) to the Pag-IBIG Fund Cashier. Applications for eligibility will be evaluated on a "pass/fail" basis. The last day for the submission of the accomplished Eligibility Documents shall be on the date of the opening of Eligibility Documents: 1:30 p.m. of August 8, 2005 at Room 602, 6/F, Atrium of Makati Condominium Building, Makati Avenue, Makati City. Only those Bidders passing the eligibility check will be entitled to purchase the Bidding Documents.

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted, unless otherwise stated, to organizations with at least seventy-five percent (75%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines. In accordance with the IRR-A of RA. 9184, only Bids from eligible Bidders will be opened. In accordance with the IRR-A of R.A. 9184 a contract will only be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder who was determined as such during post-qualification.

Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from Pag-IBIG Fund and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on August 16-18, 2005.

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by Bidders that passed the eligibility check upon the presentation of the Notice of Eligibility to the BAC-CW Secretariat and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee of P2,000.00. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the bidder or his authorized representative on or before 5:00 p.m. of August 18, 2005.

The Pag-IBIG Fund will hold a Pre-Bid Conference (for eligibility) at 1:30 p.m. of July 27, 2005 and another Pre-bid Conference open to all Eligible Bidders at 1:30 p.m. of August 19, 2005 at the following address: Room 602, 6/F Atrium of Makati Condominium Building, Makati Avenue, Makati City.

Eligible Bidders must submit their Bids at Room 704, 7/F Atrium of Makati Condominium Building, Makati Avenue, Makati City on or before September 2, 2005, 1:30 p.m. Late Bids shall not be accepted. Bid opening shall be on the same date and time at Room 602, 6/F Atrium of Makati Condominium Building, Makati Avenue, Makati City.

The Pag-IBIG Fund reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

(Sgd.) **JAIME A. FABIANA**
Chairman
Bids and Awards Committee-Civil Works

(PDI–July 13 & 19, 2005)

ERRATUM

In the advertisement of **Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority** published July 12, 2005 Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid, **Item III – Tables and Chairs, High Quality Plastic (Lot), Approved Budget should be P374,000.00** instead of P74,000.00 as published.

Our apology.

(PDI–July 13, 2005)

Corporate Compensation and CBA Survey 2005

THE EMPLOYERS Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP) has released the results of its Labor Market Information Service Projects – Corporate Compensation Survey (CCS) 2005 and Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBA) Survey 2005. CCS 2005 features salary ranges of executives and rank-and-file employees surveyed from 81 participating firms. While, the CBA Survey 2005 presents statistical figures, with analysis, of overtime rates, retirement plan, bonuses, allowances, loans, leaves and other types of monetary benefits and assistance. To avail of copies, please contact ECOP Research at 890-4845/47.

Republic of the Philippines
City of Olongapo
-0-
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
General Services Office, 2/F City Hall Complex
Tel./Fax No. 047-222-2699
Web: www.olongapocity.gov.ph
Email: Olongapo@piol.net

July 11, 2005

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The City Government of Olongapo through the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) invites contractors to apply for the eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project : Janitorial Services for Various City Government Buildings as follows:

Lot No.	Location	No. of Personnel
1	City Hall	4
2	James L. Gordon Memorial Hospital	20
3	Convention Center	5
4	Gordon College	7
5	City Mall	11
6	City Museum	2
	Total	49

Contract No.	OC-076-CMO-001-05 GD
Brief Description	Janitorial Services
Approved Budget	Php5,421,239.00

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last two years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to the Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

COMPLETE SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

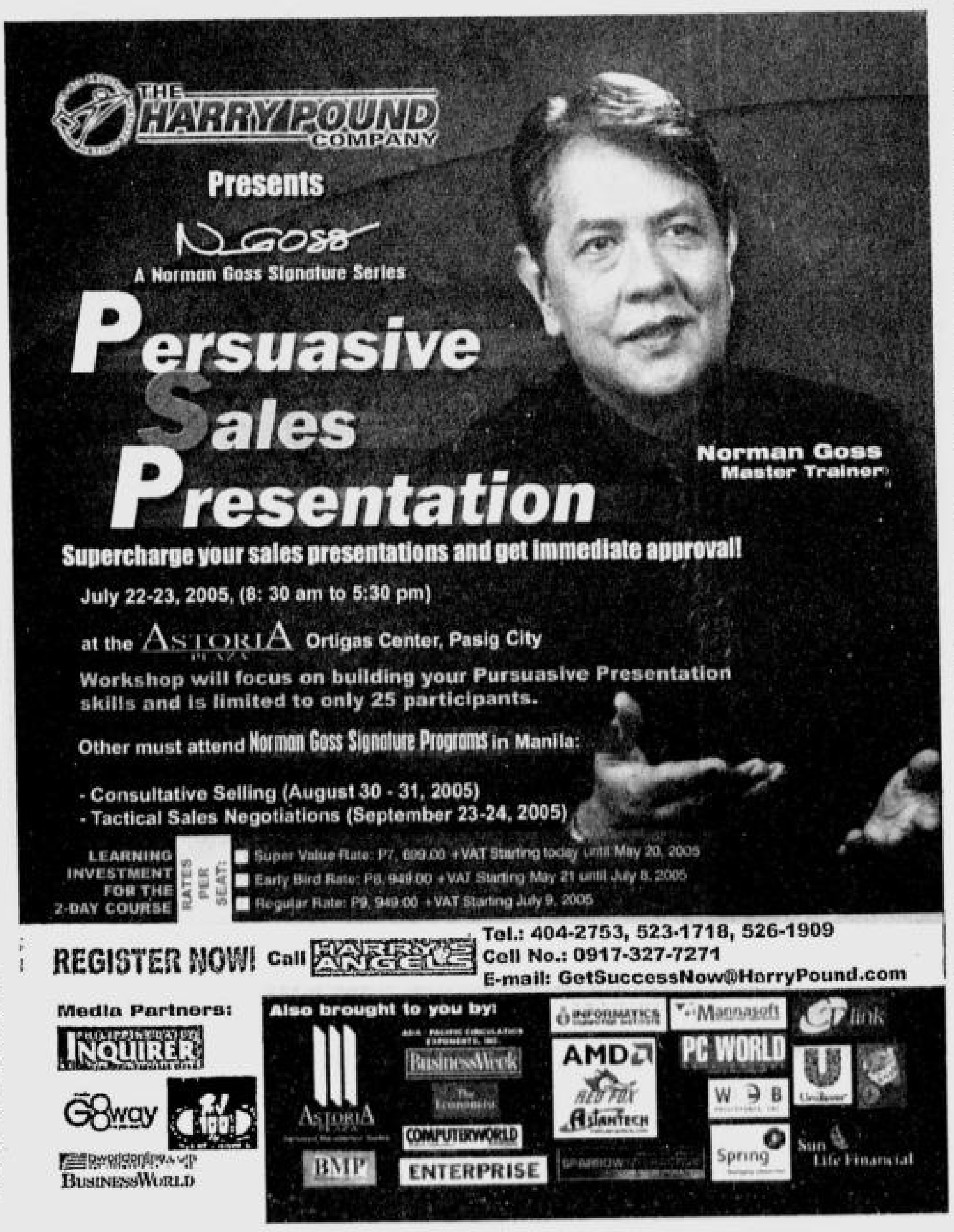
DATE	ACTIVITIES	VENUE
July 11, 2005 to July 25, 2005	Posted at Olongapo City Website, GEPS Website and Conspicuous Places	
July 25, 2005 to Aug. 01, 2005	Issuance of Bid Documents upon payment of non-refundable bid form fee of P4,500.00 8:00 am to 5:00 pm from the BAC Secretariat	BAC Secretariat 2/F Gen. Services Office, Olongapo City Hall
Aug. 01, 2005	Pre-Bidding Conference at 10:30 am	
Aug. 12, 2005	Opening of Bids at 2:00 pm	
Aug. 15, 2005	Bid Evaluation	
Aug. 16, 2005	Post Qualification	
Aug. 17, 2005	Notice of Award	

The BAC reserves the right to accept and reject any bid and to cancel all bids at any time prior to award of contract, waive any defects therein and accept the offer most advantageous to the City Government without thereby incurring any liability whatsoever to offset expenses or losses the bidder may incur in the preparation of the bids and obligation to inform the bidder(s) of the ground(s) for the basis of BAC's action.

(Sgd.) **MERLITO J. MAJARUCON**
Head, BAC Secretariat

NOTED BY:
(Sgd.) **JOHNNY B. CHOA**
BAC Chairman

(PDI–July 13 & 20, 2005)



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PAG-IBIG FUND

Corporate Headquarters
The Atrium of Makati
Makati Avenue, Makati City

Circular – Letter
Series of 2005

TO : ALL NCR BRANCHES / REGIONAL OFFICES / SUB-REGIONAL & EXTENSION OFFICES / COLLECTING AGENTS

Notice is hereby given regarding the loss of the following Pag-IBIG Fund Receipts which were issued to Lakeside Nest Realty Inc. and were declared lost per Affidavit of Loss executed by its Vice-President, Mr. Serapio B. Lucero on June 01, 2005:

E6079394	E7770659
E6079478	E7770718
E6079481	E8488193
E6079588	E8729036
E6079630	E9246364
E6999601	E9246431

Said PFRs are hereby cancelled and payments under said PFR series will not be honored by the Fund.

(Sgd.) **ATTY. ROMERO FEDERICO S. QUIMBO**
President & Chief Executive Officer

June 08, 2005

(PDI–July 13, 20 & 27, 2005)

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NFA turns over warehouse to Maribojoc govt

THE NATIONAL Food Authority has turned over a P1.3 million-worth warehouse located in Barangay Busao, Tagbilaran City to the municipal government of Maribojoc in simple ceremonies held recently. The 3,000-bag capacity Municipal Grains Level Center (MLGC) warehouse with a solar drying pavement will serve as a temporary depot and trading center for the farmers' produce in the area. Construction of the warehouse facility is part of NFA's post harvest modernization program. The lot where the warehouse is located was donated by the municipal government of Maribojoc as part of their equity in the program. Gracing the turn-over ceremonies were Congressman Edgar Chatto, Maribojoc Mayor Gabino Redulla, vice mayor Philip Medequiso, NFA assistant administrator Ludovico Jarina, NFA regional director Flo Pascual and NFA Bohol provincial manager Nestor Rey Alcoseba. The Busao-Agahay-Toril-Sto. Rosario Irrigators' Association (BATS-IA) will be the beneficiary of the said warehouse. Another MLGC warehouse located in Cahayag, Tubigon is now being utilized by the Cahayag Multi-Purpose Cooperative. For more information on NFA programs, please send inquiries via Text NFA through mobile number 0917-6210927. For information on programs of the Department of Agriculture, please visit the DA's official website at www.da.gov.ph.

NFA Lingayen puts up additional BGP outlets

THE NATIONAL Food Authority here has set up additional Bigasan ni Gloria sa Palengke (BGP) rice outlets in the municipalities of Bayambang, Calasiao, Malasiqui, Mangaldan and San Carlos City to serve more consumers in Western Pangasinan. To be operated by the local grains retailers associations, the BGP outlets were established to ensure adequate and continuous supply of good quality and low-priced rice for the lean months. NFA Western Pangasinan assistant provincial manager Cecilia Concubierta led the ribbon-cutting ceremonies during the formal opening of the said rice outlets. Concubierta said the NFA shall continue to deploy its Palengke Watch teams to ensure that rice businessmen adhere strictly to the rules and regulations of the Philippine Grains Standardization Program (PGSP). The monitoring teams are also tasked to look into irregularities in rice trading such as stock depletion or diversion and overpricing. For more information on NFA programs, please send inquiries via Text NFA through mobile number 0917-6210927. For information on programs of the Department of Agriculture, please visit the DA's official website at www.da.gov.ph.

BUSINESS

Romulo disqualified as EPCIB director; bank risks sanctions

ROMULO

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez and Doris C. Dumlao

A UNIT of the Securities and Exchange Commission yesterday disqualified Equitable PCI director Roberto R. Romulo as independent director of the board of Equitable PCI Bank.

Shortly after the SEC came out with its decision, Romulo issued a statement, saying that he already had asked the corporate secretary of EPCIBank "to formally withdraw" his nomination as independent director of the bank.

EPCIB stockholders are scheduled to meet on July 19.

"I made this decision in light of all the acrimony and abusive propaganda that have been generated in the lead-up to Tuesday's Annual General Meeting," Romulo yesterday said. "I believe it is no longer possible for me to serve prospectively as an independent director and stay silent about what is taking place at the same time. I want to free myself to comment on the issues [involving] EPCIB and the government financial institutions holding shares in the bank."

In his statement, Romulo hit his critics whom he accused of "trying to mix politics and business ... (bringing) the affairs of the President and her family into the picture.".

"By taking myself out of the nomination process, I hope to restore some sanity and fairness to the voting for directors and the determination of who should lead EPCIB this coming year," Romulo said.

The SEC unit yesterday forwarded a letter detailing its decision to disqualify Romulo from the bank board.

In the letter, the SEC also directed EPCIB to explain why it should not be sanctioned for submitting incomplete disclosures, according to the regulator's corporate finance department.

The SEC learned that, based on the 2004 general information statement of the bank's affiliate, Equicom Systems Management Inc., Romulo was chair and member of the board of Equicom.

"A fact which was not disclosed by Equitable PCI in its information statement," the SEC wrote.

ESMI is majority-owned by Equitable Development Corp. (EDC), a substantial shareholder of Equitable PCI.

EDC is wholly owned by the Go family. Bank chair Antonio L. Go and K&L Holding Corp. have substantial shares in the bank.

Winston Garcia, general manager of the state pension fund Government Service Insurance System, had filed a protest with the SEC, saying that Romulo's status as chairman of Equicom Management Inc. disqualified him from acting as independent director for EPCIB.

Also, the GSIS earlier criticized EPCIB's decision to elect a director that allowed the Go family to maintain control of the bank.

Meanwhile, the group of mall magnate Henry Sy has asked the Court of Appeals to restrain EPCIBank's 15-member board from implementing any provision of the bank's amended bylaws to protect the interest of other shareholders.

The SM group, with an estimated 2.5 percent stake in EPCIBank, had wanted to get one board seat in the EPCIBank during last year's stockholders meeting. It then solicited proxies to support its bid last year, but was eventually blocked because it represented "interests adverse to the bank."

The SM group has interests in Banco de Oro Universal Bank.

ADB backs sale of Equitable's non-performing loans, assets

THE ASIAN Development Bank yesterday approved a local currency loan to finance the purchase of a portfolio of non-performing loans and assets from Equitable PCI Bank and Equitable Savings Bank of the Philippines by a special purpose group.

The size of the loan was not disclosed at the request of the special purpose vehicle, Cameron Granville Asset Management, said William Willms, the ADB's principal structured finance specialist.

Cameron Granville Asset Management is part of the German Bayerische Hypo-und Vereinsbank (HVB) group, which is Germany's second-largest bank with total assets of about $470 billion.

The ADB said the portfolio being acquired has a book value of $98 million and HVB's Singapore branch will service the portfolio.

"ADB's participation in this transaction is consistent with one of the key thrusts of ADB's private-sector development strategy for the Philippines, and that is to help address the non-performing loans and asset problem in public and private financial institutions," Willms said.

He said the transaction is in line with the Philippine government's medium-term plans to promote a stronger and more stable financial sector and the development of domestic capital markets.

The ADB recently helped National Home Mortgage Finance Corporation of the Philippines in its sale of a portfolio of delinquent mortgage loans to DB Real Estate Global Opportunities.

AFP

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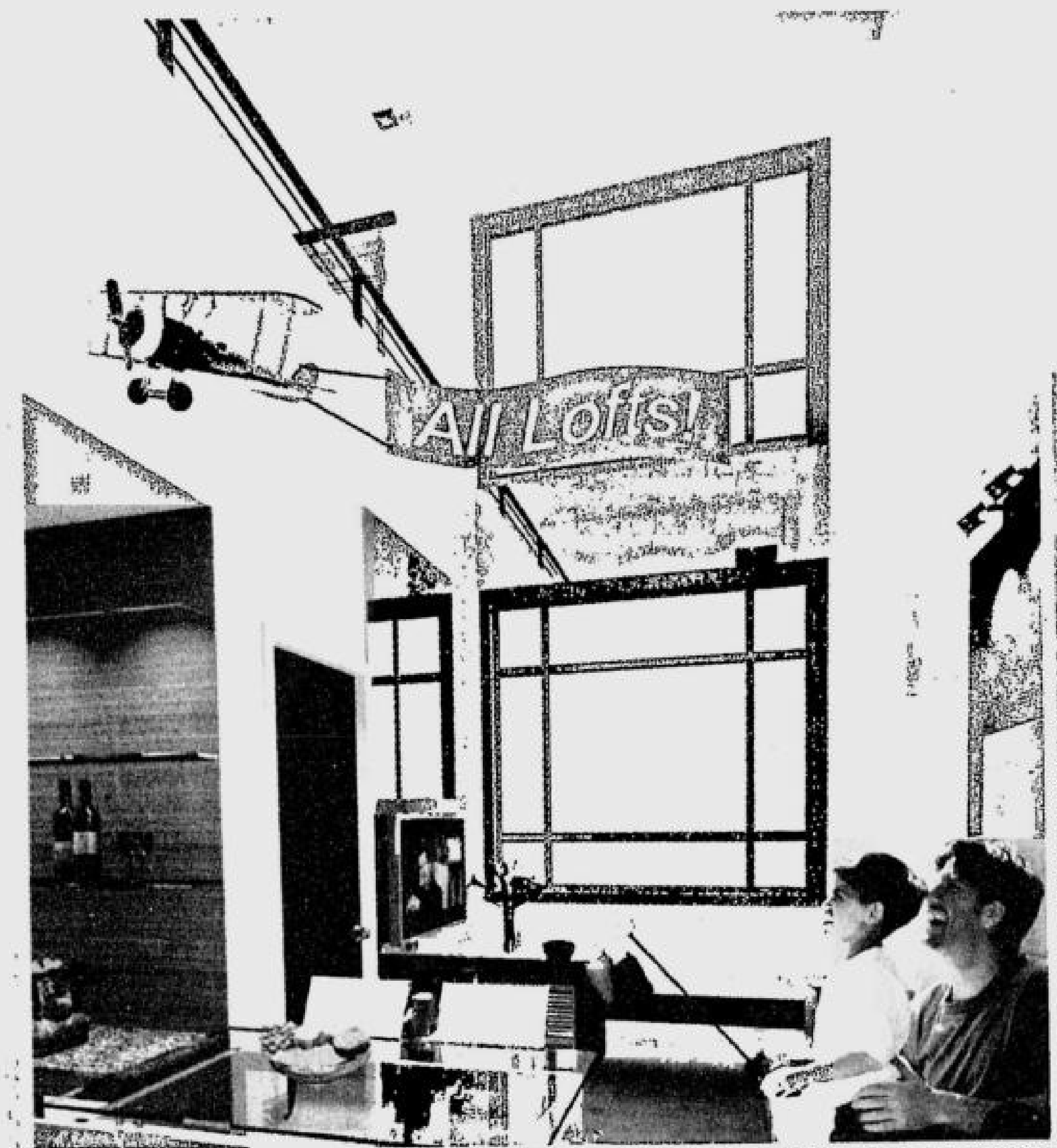

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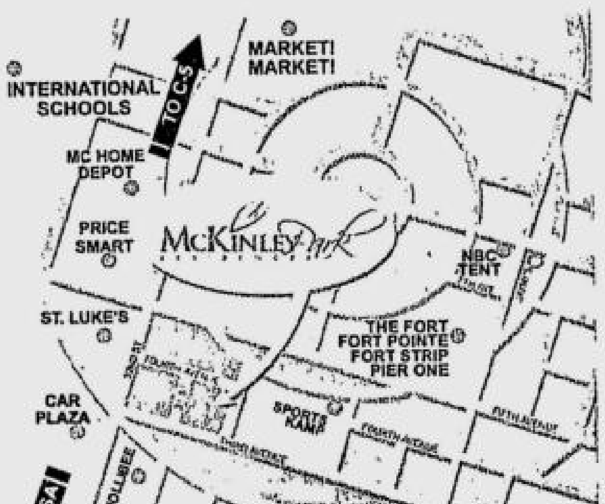

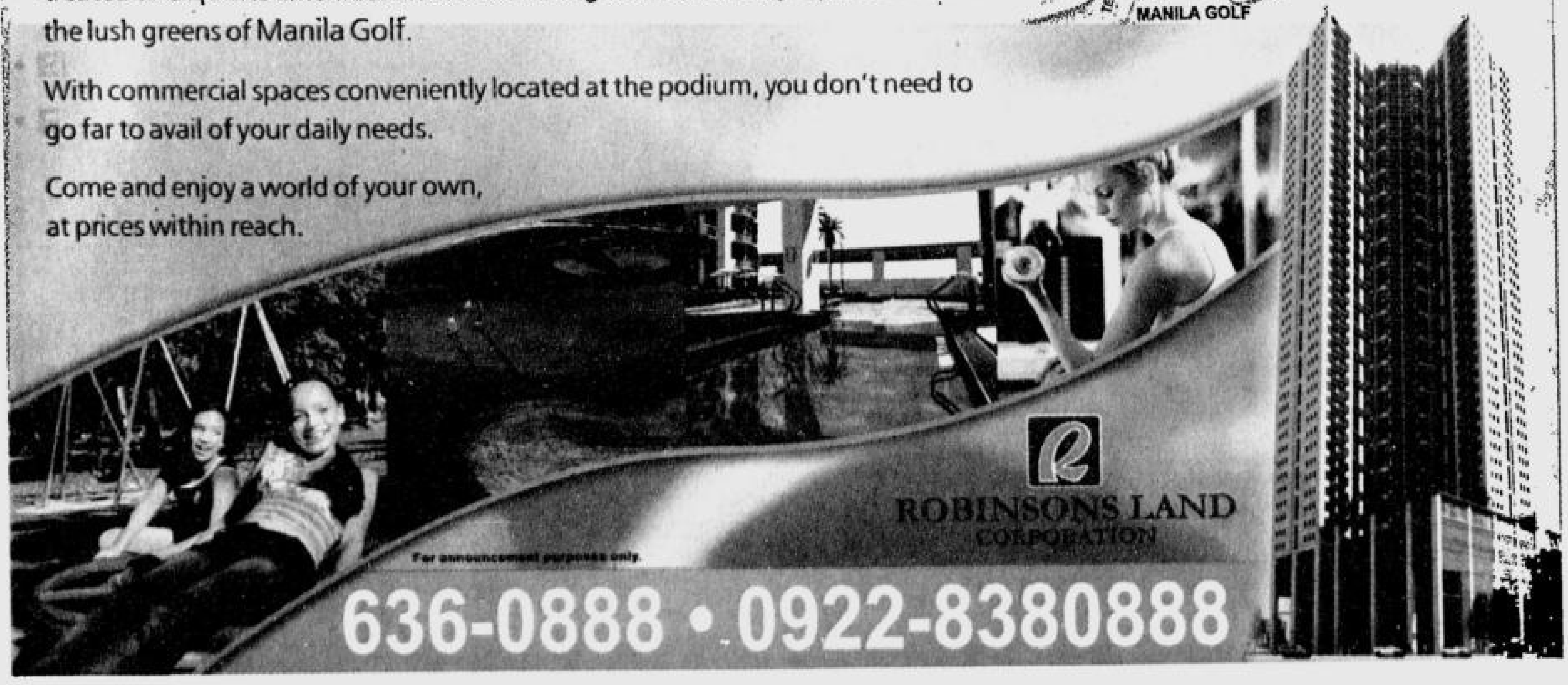

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Editor **Chelo Banal-Formoso**
Chief of Correspondents **Pam Pastor**

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2bU! invades the mall *Part 3*

THIS week, read about our adventures as a mall pianist, a beauty advisor at the Shu Uemura counter, a PowerBooks customer service associate and a Big Chill staff member.

We also have a one-on-one interview with Neil Gaiman who made his local fans happy last weekend.

Last week's lesson was to be nicer to other people. While we can't stress that enough, this week, we realized that, sometimes, when you step on other people's shoes, you learn to appreciate your own life more.

Are you in the mood to swap careers for a day? E-mail us at Ls_2bu@inquirer.com.ph and we'll see what we can do.

THE AUTHOR (right) with friend Deng

The affair of the ivory keys

By Catherine Young
2bU! Correspondent

Playing the piano in a mall is as frightening as doing a recital

FOR 12 years since I was five, a piano music teacher came over every Saturday morning and made me play classical, sometimes obscure, pieces. I was assigned to practice every day, but, being young, I naturally resented the idea. Aside from reading too much, not practicing was the other thing for which I was constantly punished.

But I'm really happy that my parents pushed me to play. Of course, I've only come to fully appreciate it now that I've chosen a profession that maximizes the use of the left side of the brain. Playing an instrument compensates for that. It also relieves stress.

Dream job

It feels silly writing this now, but one of my career choices as a kid was to be a concert pianist. I volunteered for this job because of that childhood dream and because I wouldn't risk public humiliation another time. And so it came about that Rockwell Powerplant graciously agreed to lend me its baby grand piano.

Out of my comfort zone

Ironically, playing the piano in public is one of my biggest fears.

I'm not sure how to even begin to explain this irrational fear in me, so I shall describe it instead. My hands visibly shake. I feel an odd mixture of the urge to cry and the desire to barf. I forget what the notes look like and, being primarily a note-reader (I hate chords), this meant trouble.

It was by pure coincidence that my friend Denise Teng (Deng) and her friends from the UP College of Fine Arts were walking through the mall for the Neil Gaiman book signing later in the afternoon. I relied on them for moral support.

Because I had a flu, a runny nose gave me the perfectly good excuse to take small breaks when I felt the all-too-familiar sense of claustrophobia. I got through the songs I practiced on, but had to forego the ones I knew I couldn't play under duress.

Deng sat beside me most of the time, holding my hands to stop them from shaking. Her friends even helped out in turning the pages.

Cheers to you, Beethoven

If there's one piano piece I can play to save my life, it would have to be "Fur Elise." My parents loved the piece so much they paid me 60 bucks to memorize it. To a nine-year-old in the early '90s, it was a good deal.

Sometimes I think it was the best money they ever spent. It was the piece that made people stop and watch. Jim Chappell's "Gone" was a close second, but I only played half of it since I couldn't—for the life of me—find the rest of the sheet.

I fumbled a bit on "Bakit Ngayon Ka Lang," and could only play Jim Brickman's "Your Love" when someone started singing it. When I couldn't think of what else to play, I chose a standard classic piece called "Ballade pour Adeline," which I learned way back in 1992.

And so the morning ended well for me. I played the set twice, in between numerous breaks I needed to take to clear my head and despite wrong notes I hit.

The high note for me was when a member of the audience came up to me and told me I played well, and introduced herself as the guitarist of a band called Apologia.This was my vindicating moment.

I ended at 11:30 to avoid the lunch crowd, so I guess I didn't completely eliminate my fear. But I'm really glad I faced it. My love for music has been resuscitated significantly, for which I am grateful.

But for now, my affair with the ivory keys would have to end. I am, after all, only temporarily yours.

A thousand apologies to the musical sensibilities of Rockwell shoppers last Saturday from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. Thank you to Rockwell Powerplant Mall. Your piano is intact.

E-mail the author at cathy_young1@yahoo.com.

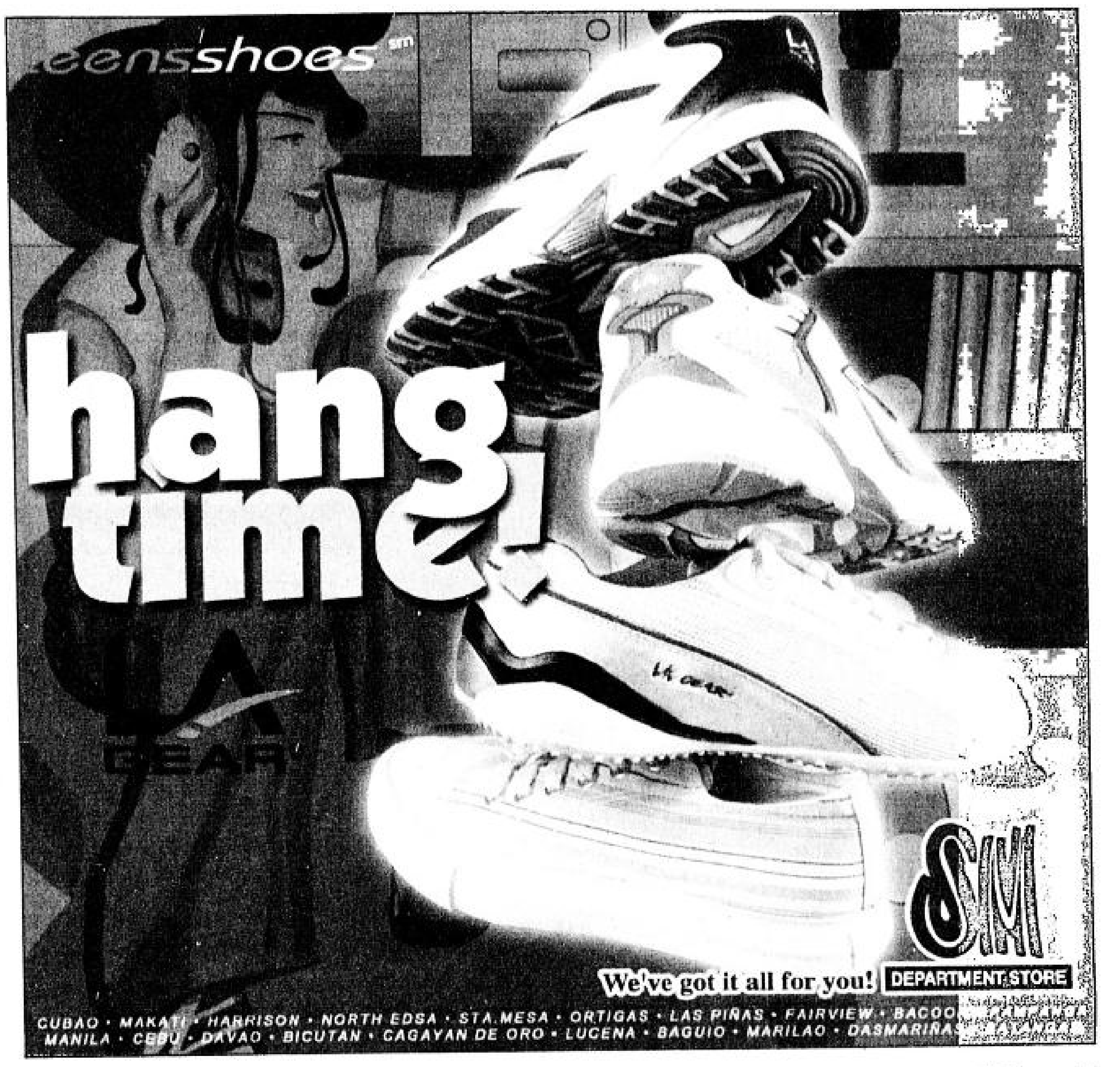
The job: Mall Pianist at the Rockwell Powerplant

The good:

- Having strangers appreciate your playing
- Little kids pointing to the piano and wanting to play
- Making new friends
- Facing my fear

The bad:

- Hitting the wrong notes
- Not having close friends around



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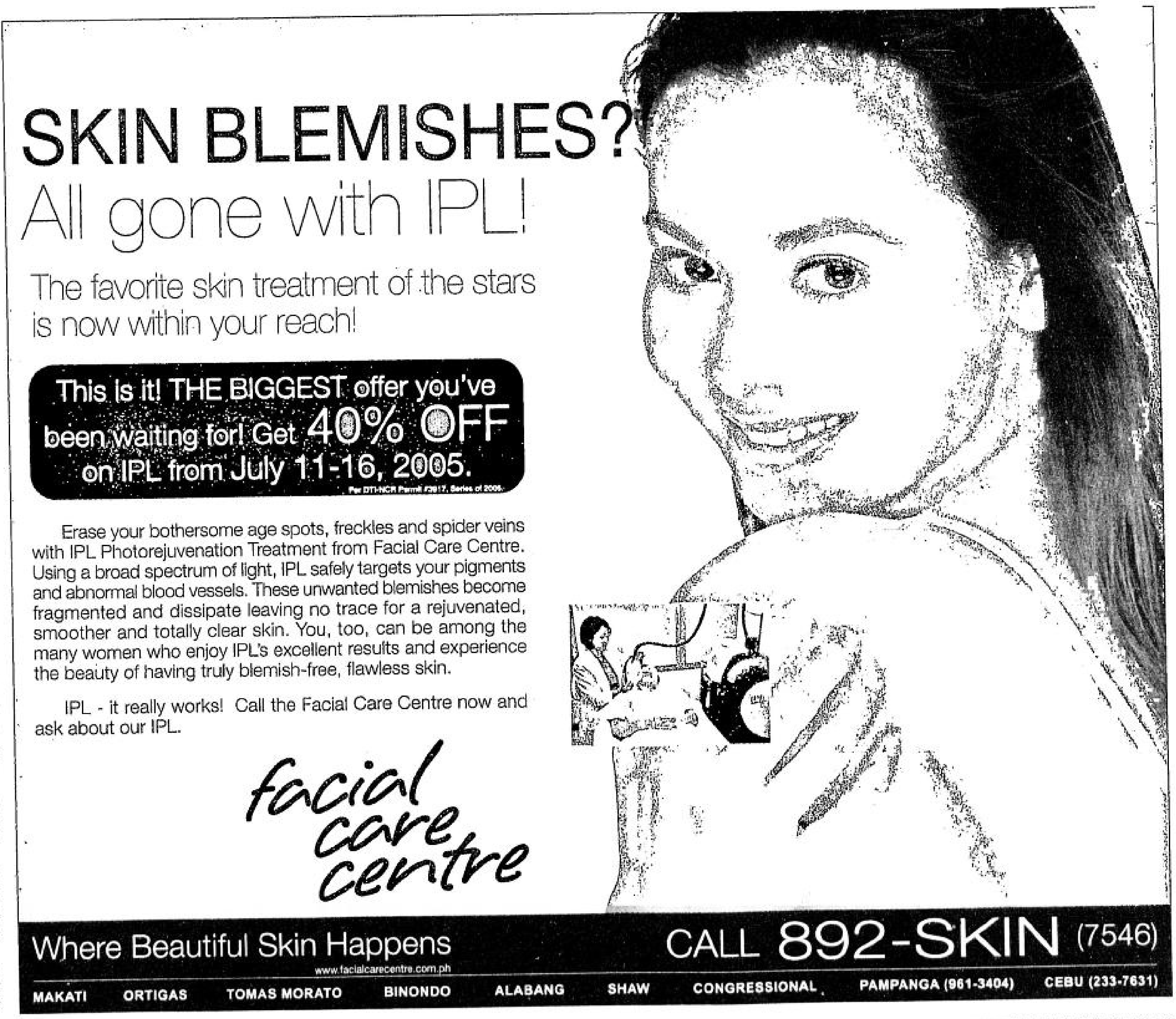
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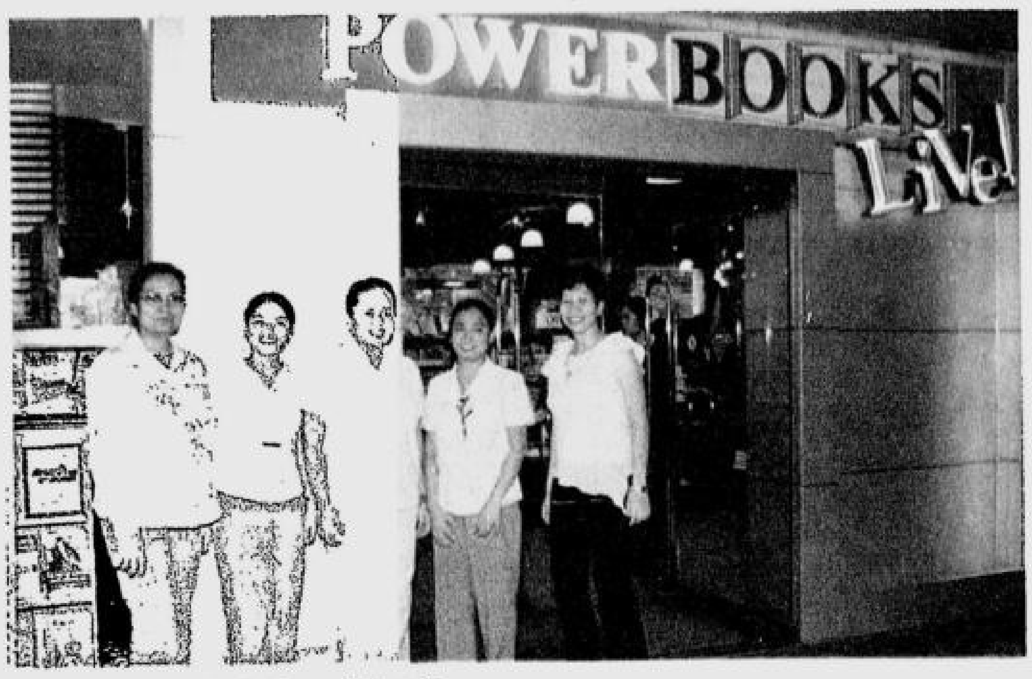

WITH the PowerBooks Greenbelt staff

Powerbooks gave me more than just a crash course in customer service, it showed me another way to touch people's lives

By Pam Pastor

YOU want the real experience?" Jennifer Mendoza-Lopez, PowerBooks' sales manager, asked me on the phone two days before my scheduled stint at the bookstore.

"Yes, ma'am," I said, determined to get a real feel of the job and not just go through a half-baked experiment.

"Okay. Your shift will be from 10 to 7. Be here by 10. Wear a plain white blouse, no lace, nothing fancy, khaki pants and black shoes. You can wear gold or silver jewelry, no crystals and nothing dangling. We want zero customer complaints. We cannot give them the excuse that you're from the newspaper and you're just trying it out for a day."

I took careful notes. Ms Jane sounded like a strict boss. I liked it.

Two days later, I found myself in Greenbelt 4 at 9:45 a.m., wearing a hideous white blouse I found way in the back of my closet, with my hair's pink streaks hidden in an ugly bun.

Clearly, the day had no space for vanity. It was one meant for working.

Ms Jane arrived, quickly toured me around and gave me important pointers. "We don't say no to customers. As long as we can give them what they want, we do it. We treat everyone with the same respect, even children. The phones must be answered in three rings or less. We don't keep customers waiting. If we ask them to wait, we give them a time. If they're on the phone asking you to check a book for them, let them choose if they want to wait for five minutes or if they want you to call them back."

I filed the information quickly in my head, willing myself to remember and apply it.

We walked back into the office so I could leave my phone in my bag. Mobile phones are not allowed while you're working.

Soon, I stepped behind the Customer Service counter. My day as a Customer Sales Associate was about to start.

Easy task

Ms Jane introduced me to Maria Teresa Rodelas, PowerBooks' senior customer service associate. I was going to be working with her the whole day.

Tess was friendly. She showed me how to search for titles and authors both on the store's database and the special orders database. She tried to show me how to work the radio. Unfortunately, I couldn't get the hang of it, not even after eight hours.

My first task was easy. Tess showed me printouts of e-mail inquiries from clients who visited PowerBooks' website. All I had to do was check the database for the books they were requesting, note the prices and their availability.

It was still a slow part of the day, Tess said. Customers would start coming in after lunchtime.

Before I was done finding answers to the e-mail inquiries, it was time for my lunch break. PowerBooks employees get two breaks in a day: one one-hour break and another fifteen-minute break.

When I returned from my break, I met Riza Poso, another customer service associate, who was just beginning her shift. I continued to attend to the e-mail inquiries, only pausing when people stopped at the counter to inquire about a book.

"Hi, do you have books by Murakami?" The guy whipped out his mobile phone and showed me a message with the author's name in it.

"Let me check, sir," I said.

As I turned towards the computer, he added, "I'm not sure about the spelling of the first name though."

"No problem," I said, smiling again.

I typed Murakami in the database and soon, a list emerged.

"Sir, we have several books written by Haruki Murakami. Do you have any titles in mind or would you like to see them all?"

He said he wanted to see them all. I offered to have the books brought to him but he said he'd rather find them on the shelves.

"Okay sir, please proceed to the Fiction Section at the ground floor. Someone will meet you there to assist you," I said, while one of my colleagues radioed a description of the guy to the person in charge of the Fiction Section for quick identification.

Steps

I spent my shift like that, searching for books people wanted. And it's not as simple as it sounds. The first step is checking the database. If the book is there, we confirm if there are copies in the store. If there are no copies in the store, we ask the customer if he or she want us to check with the other PowerBooks branches. If the other branches have the book in stock, the customer has two options—have the book reserved for pick-up, or have it brought to the PowerBooks branch while the customer waits.

TRYING (and failing) to work the radio

If the book is not in the store's database, PowerBooks has a special order service which allows people to order the books that they want. Since the prices are in dollars, the Customer Service Associate has to compute the estimated price of the book in pesos, converting the price and including shipping charges. That's another thing I didn't get the hang of. There's a reason I've never claimed Math as one of my strengths.

The routine of looking for books was broken by people stopping by to have copies of "Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince" reserved, by customers who think the customer service counter is the cashier, by people who were either applying for or claiming their PowerBooks Powercard and by people asking if I could open books for them. And since we were never supposed to say no to customers, I always opened the books.

I wondered how the PowerBooks employees were able to memorize the book titles, authors and where they were located in the bookstore. "When you're here every day, it comes naturally,'
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The job: Customer Service Associate at PowerBooks

The good:

- Constant access to books. PowerBooks employees are allowed, even encouraged, to borrow two books a week so they'll know what they're selling.
- Being surrounded by fun people who are as passionate about books as you are.
- Seeing how books continue to touch different lives in different ways every single day.
- The proximity to The Java Man, which has the best three-cheese panini and Oreo Javaccino.

The bad:

- The constant lure of book-shopping. If I did work at PowerBooks, all my salary would probably go straight back to the cashier.
- Clients who show the bookstore's employees no respect. Every single store has to deal with irate customers. In PowerBooks, they come in the form of people who get mad when the book they want to buy has been sold out and when the line at the customer service gets long and they get impatient while waiting for the book they want to be located. I am thankful I have no personal experiences to share on this matter.

Peddling Beauty

Text and photos
by Bianca Consunji
2bU! Correspondent

ONE thing's for sure—it takes more than the gift of gab to sell cosmetics. I used to think all it took to sell skincare and makeup was basic knowledge of the product and the ability to flatter a customer, but after one day of hanging out at a Shu Uemura counter, I now know better.

I had excitedly volunteered for the job, thinking that since Shu Uemura was one of my favorite brands of makeup, I could easily pass on my enthusiasm to other customers. After all, when my classmates and friends have beauty-related questions, I usually am able to answer their questions. (I had a standard spiel: sunscreen is a must, colorful makeup is good, sleeping with makeup on is inexcusable.)

But my day as a beauty advisor, BA for short, proved that it took more than a lot of enthusiasm and basic knowledge to be able to sell skincare and cosmetics to choosy customers.

My day as a BA started pretty early, since BA's have to come in 10 minutes before the store opening to start their day (as a rule, Rustan's employees are not allowed to come in earlier than that to prevent pilferage). So within that time, they have to make sure the counters are clean and well-arranged and they are impeccably groomed, since BA's are not allowed to be seen putting on their makeup in public. (And the makeup has to be good—would you buy cosmetics from a sloppy salesperson?)

Within minutes of the opening at the Shangri-La branch, a few people were already dropping by the counter, asking about the latest products and asking recommendations for skincare and makeup. Although Xeng Zulueta, Shu Uemura's chief makeup artist for the Philippines, had briefed me on how to deal with customers, I found myself referring them to more experienced BA's when they started bombarding me with questions—and they had a lot of questions.

Customers, after all, shell out money for top-quality products, and it's understandable that before they splurged on something, they would want to know everything they could about the product.

Sometimes, they came in droves, sometimes, they trickled in. But there was always a steady stream of customers eager to try a new product or replenish their old staples. There were middle-aged matrons who bought huge bottles of the brand's star product, the immensely popular cleansing oil. High school kids came in to buy their first eyelash curlers with their moms, while working girls often went for a lipstick or two for their *kikay* kits.

THE AUTHOR (center) with Tina Tinio, brand manager of Shu Uemura, and Xeng Zulueta

Although most of the customers usually bought a couple of items, there were some big spenders. I was surprised to see a woman nonchalantly get some tens of thousands of pesos worth of merchandise in one go, when I thought she was just browsing.

I thought at first that it would be easy to identify the customers who just wanted to look from those who really intended to buy something. But it turned out that often, the buyers who loudly argued about color and staying power were the ones who got just an item or two, while the clients who listened quietly to the BA's ended up purchasing the most merchandise, like an entire skincare range. Surprisingly, males made up a good number of Shu Uemura clients I saw.

"There was this guy who bought a ton of stuff for his girlfriend—he got her everything she needed, from skincare to makeup," Xeng recounted. "Most of them get things for their girlfriends or moms, although we've had some buy stuff for themselves."

Although I didn't encounter any problem clients for the one day I was there, the Shu Uemura staff have had quite a few. "We've had diva customers abuse our staff before. They'd say things like '*O gusto mo bigyan muna kita ng* time *para basahin yung kodigo mo*' to our trainees. The thing is, you can't avoid snooty customers who boss around people just because they're buying something," Xeng said.

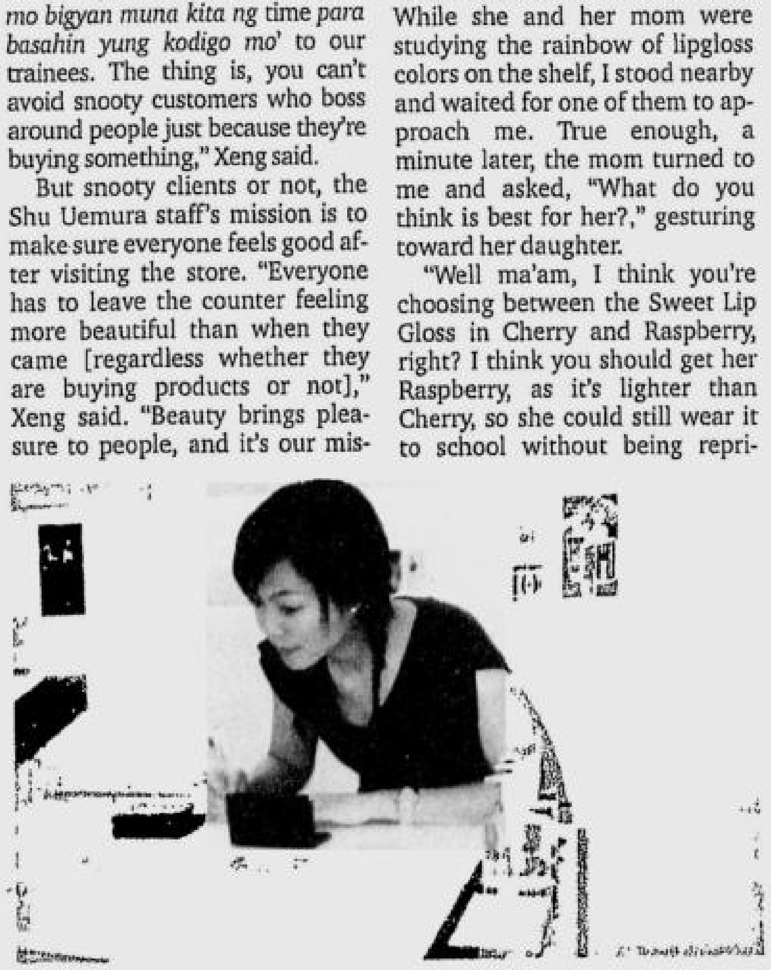
But snooty clients or not, the Shu Uemura staff's mission is to make sure everyone feels good after visiting the store. "Everyone has to leave the counter feeling more beautiful than when they came [regardless whether they are buying products or not]," Xeng said. "Beauty brings pleasure to people, and it's our mission to bring that out."

With this principle in mind, I tried my best to be a good BA. I avoided hovering over customers—something many people detest. Instead, I remained at a discreet but approachable distance, and it worked. Clients were actually coming to me to inquire about products!

However, since I was quite nervous (it was my first and only day on the job, after all), I ended up passing them on to other BA's. Most of the time, I could only watch in amazement as Xeng or Yza, a top BA, spoke to the clients in confidential tones and demonstrated the marvels of cleansing oil and lengthening mascara.

Nonetheless, my day was made when I sold a tube of lipgloss, the only sale I made that day. It was to a high school girl accompanied by her mom, and she wanted a shade that she could use often. While she and her mom were studying the rainbow of lipgloss colors on the shelf, I stood nearby and waited for one of them to approach me. True enough, a minute later, the mom turned to me and asked, "What do you think is best for her?," gesturing toward her daughter.

"Well ma'am, I think you're choosing between the Sweet Lip Gloss in Cherry and Raspberry, right? I think you should get her Raspberry, as it's lighter than Cherry, so she could still wear it to school without being reprimanded, and over lipstick when she goes to parties," I replied.



XENG creating custom color palettes

Bingo. She nodded in agreement and I brought the gloss over to the counter, elated by my achievement. Since I usually have to resort to blackmail to get even my little sister to agree with me over tiny things, like what movie to watch or what ice cream to eat, getting a total stranger to approve my selection was a big thing for me.

My day at Shu Uemura made me realize that BA's hold quite a lot of responsibility in their hands. Vulnerable women walk over to cosmetics counters to feel and look good, so it is up to BA's to make them feel so. In a way, they hold almost the same responsibility as magazine editors, who tell the public what products are good or not, and what works or not.

An irresponsible BA would just slap on the latest products available in the counter and say "Wow, you look good!" just to make a sale, regardless of what the client thinks or feels. Even worse, some of them would patronize customers who disagree with them, insisting "But this is the latest look straight from Europe! *Ito ang uso!*"

Many are forced to purchase products that don't work because of a BA's arm-twisting, only to suffer from buyer's remorse (and a hefty bill) later on.

I learned just how important the staff is to a brand. Sure, you could have an excellent brand with top quality products, but with sloppy salespeople, nothing would happen. Luckily, what I saw was an example of the best in the industry. Recently, the Makati branch was declared the No. 1 Shu Uemura counter in the world.

From what I saw, there was no arm-twisting, only thorough explaining of the products and great makeup application. I wouldn't come near any customer who wanted to have makeup applied. I could do it on myself, some friends and for minor photo shoots, but I wasn't about to make people leave the counter

The job: Beauty Advisor at Shu Uemura

The good:

- You get to dress up and look good every day. If anyone accuses you of being vain, you can tell them it's part of the job.
- You get to try the latest products ahead of everyone.
- You have an excuse to talk to the famous people who visit the department stores, and you're part of all the cool events your brand hosts.
- You make people feel beautiful. Sometimes, there is no greater gratification than making people feel good about themselves.
- Two words: employee discounts

The bad:

- You have to look good and be nice to people everyday, even when you're feeling down.
- Dragging yourself out of bed and being on your feet the whole day.
- Gritting your teeth and being polite to obnoxious customers who treat you like their servant.
- You're the first to arrive and the last to leave the department store.

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m at the bookshop

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gree. In fact, when y approached our r the book “E” by which we didn't had to stop myself end him the copy I bookshelf at home. see how books conimpact in different was a thrill to try what kind of book ould be into. Their d different choices . It was clear to see ence in literature of lives they lead. young couple who ed as we tried to “This Book Will Life” for them (incidentally, I bought a copy of this book after my shift—but that's another story). There was the little girl who wanted a book on tongue twisters. There was the man who was looking for a maritime dictionary. I wondered if he was dreaming of becoming a seaman. And there was the woman who tugged at my heartstrings. She had mistaken the customer service counter as the cashier (a lot of people did, actually, but I did not take pleasure from their embarrassment, I swear) and asked me to find books on adoption. Soon, two books were in her hands, Raising Adopted Children and Parenting Your Adopted Child. “Not these,” she said. “I'm looking for a book on how to adopt children in the Philippines.”

It broke my heart that I wasn't able to help her more.

Boo-boos

“I want zero customer complaints,” Ms Jane had said to me. While I am proud to say I didn't get any complaints, I have to admit I had my share of boo-boos.

One PowerBooks employee approached the counter and asked me, “*May* sandpaper *kayo*?”

I turned around and typed “Sandpaper” in the database.

“*Wala eh*,” I said to him apologetically.

“*Hindi, hindi*,” he said. Turned out he was looking for real sandpaper. I don't know who was more embarrassed—me or him. But since there were customers waiting to have copies of the newest “Harry Potter” book to be reserved, I had no chance to die from shame.

I did have one moment of panic. A customer had left three books on the customer service counter, asking me to watch over them while she went to the toilet. I took my eyes off the counter for just a second and when I looked again, the books were gone. I grabbed Tess' arm and said, “Oh my god, *nawala yung mga libro*.” She quickly radioed her colleagues, asking them to return all the books that had been taken off the counter. I breathed a sigh of relief when the pile of books landed in front of me before the customer returned.

Things really do get crazy sometimes. I have great admiration for Tess and Riza, who are true masters of multi-tasking. How many other people can search for books, entertain clients, be on the phone with another branch and direct other employees to bring this title and that title to the customer service counter all at the same time? Only gifted ones, believe me.

Still, I found the work very pleasant. In fact, I enjoyed myself so much that when Ms Jane said I could go at 5 p.m., I said, “Can I leave at 6 instead?”

I left PowerBooks that evening with a newfound respect for its employees and their devotion to customer service.

My stint at the bookstore helped me see a different side of me. Now I know I can actually handle customer service. And just in case this writing thing falls to pieces, you might just find me knocking on PowerBooks' door.

E-mail the author at ppastor@inquirer.com.ph.

CLEARING up the counters

It takes more than the gift of gab to sell skincare and makeup to choosy customers

feeling uglier than when they came, compromising the brand in the process.)

It also took me some getting used to at first, since I spend quite a lot of time in makeup counters, checking out new products and services for articles, and here I was, pitching products to other people. It also took some humility to admit that I had a lot to learn—I thought I knew a lot about beauty, but my day at the Shu Uemura counter proved otherwise. I also thought it was easy—after all, how much work could it be to convince people to buy something that would actually make them look good?

I spent only one day on the job, but it taught me a lot about beauty, people, and well, service—something that lots of salespeople still need to learn.

Email the author at bianca consunji@yahoo.com

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Slicin' and shakin'

By Tammy David
2bU! Correspondent

AS A RECENT shake convert and also the laziest among the correspondents, I naturally chose Big Chill as my assignment for 2bU!'s mall jobs issue. I was very excited since I was hoping to nick some top secret formulas from Big Chill's kitchen (guilty!). I also expected the job to be a breeze—just tossing ingredients in the blender and serving the shake with a smile. Well, obviously I knew too little.

Since I was only free during the weekends, I chose to work on a Saturday from 12 nn-8 p.m. at Big Chill's Power Plant Makati branch. Yes, I expected many people but I didn't expect an army of shakelovers ordering bestseller Strawberry Mango for their "War of the Worlds" screening. But the Power Plant staff of six managed everything well.

I arrived on time and I was greeted by Raymond, my trainer of the day. I was asked to wear only the apron, a hairnet and a pink cap. He later gave me a crash course on how to make shakes and enumerated the popular drinks. I hesitated to be assigned to the counter since I didn't want to be liable for any losses. I also skipped making shakes for fear of risking Big Chill's good name. So I ended up being stationed in the kitchen where "back-up" happened.

I thought working for a day at Big Chill would be a breeze—just tossing ingredients in the blender and serving the shake with a smile

No, I didn't sit down and wait for a staff member to faint. Back-up meant slicing numerous fruits and mixing syrup, the lifeblood of Big Chill.

Challenge

The only fruit I knew how to peel was a banana. So it was a challenge for me to wash, slice and sometimes peel fresh fruits like watermelons, green mangoes, kiwis or strawberries. I worked with Raymond who was already a back-up expert. Not only did he slice and peel speedily with no cuts, he would also meticulously look for damaged or rotten items and weed them out. It was nice to know that Big Chill is particular with their fruit ingredients.

Another toughie was taking the seeds out of the watermelon, which I gave up since I would dig in too hard using the knife and the slicing would turn into dicing. With kiwi, a soft fruit, I was also too clumsy, and ditto with a green mango which I ended up sculpting instead of slicing. I had the easiest time with mangoes.

Slicing fruits while standing up in the small kitchen/stockroom soon took their toll. My back started to ache and my lazy legs started sending messages to my brain to take a break. I rewarded myself at 2 p.m. with a Jamaican pattie. Big Chill also gave me a jumbo cup of Strawberry Mango to go with my pattie. Eating the combo was pure bliss, but I soon had to go back to work and do more back-up since Saturday was indeed Big Chill's busiest day.

By afternoon, I was getting the hang of it. Since it was a busy day, the floor got wet and sticky thanks to messy customers and trails left by deliveries. I mopped the floor—an easy task since the stall was small and some people were kind enough to avoid the freshly cleaned floor.

After this, I had to thoroughly wash my hands, dab my hands with petroleum jelly and put on some plastic gloves before doing another round of back-up. I didn't notice my shift was almost ending. Soon enough, my sister arrived and it was time for me to go. She was disappointed to see me slicing and not making the shakes; she had wanted me to make a reproduction of her favorite avocado shake with milk. She thought doing back-up was easy. Well, I threatened to slice her fingers since my experience was not easy at all.

The Big Chill experience made me stay away from fruit for a while and go berserk whenever I detected any fruity smell. My mission to learn some formulas to put up Tammy's Bigger Chill didn't also push through, since Big Chill's secret was in its syrup and, yes, hard work. Both of which will take me a long time to get a hold of.

So for now, my Big Chill experience will consist only of buying Mango Banana while watching movies.

E-mail tammydavid@gmail.com.

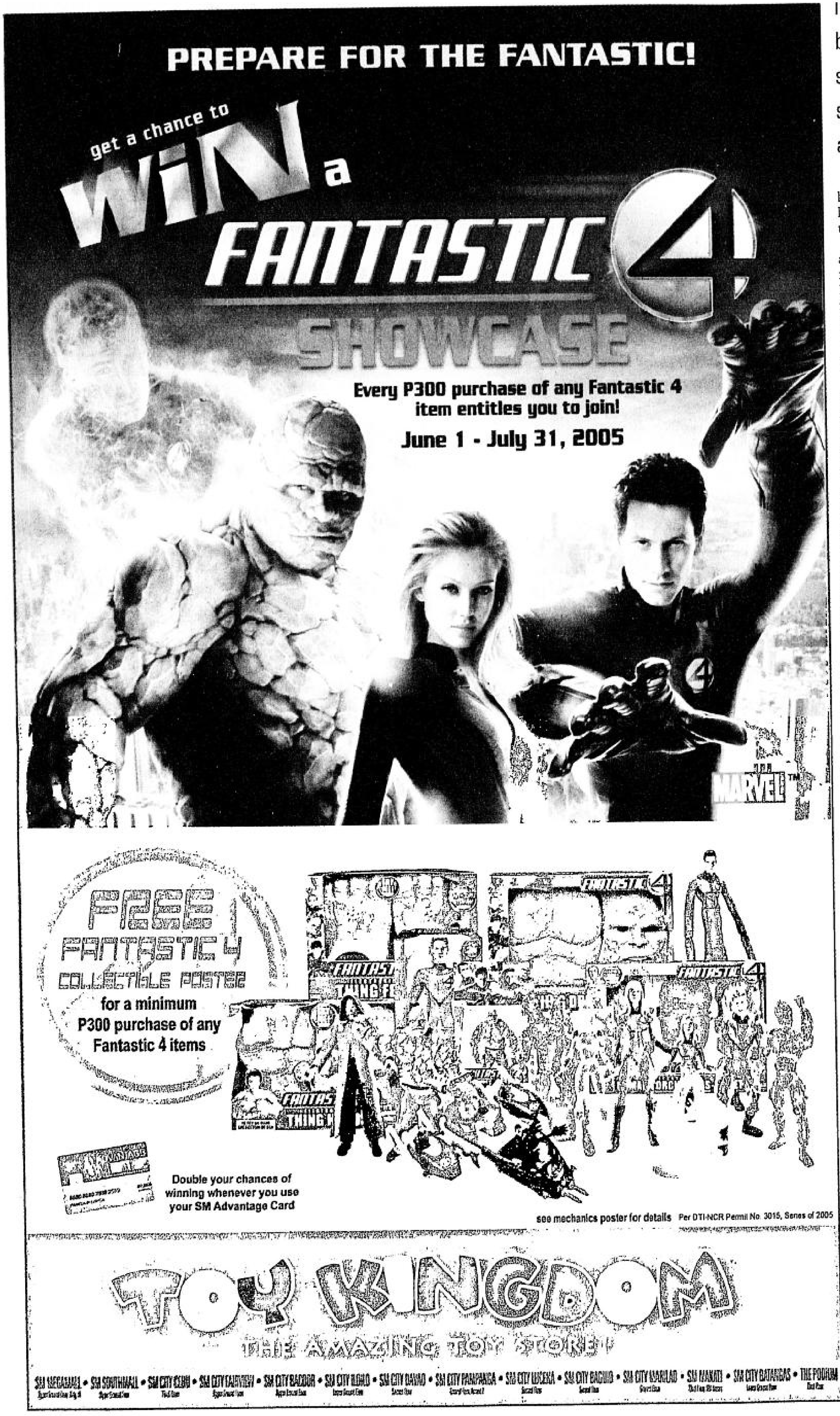
THE AUTHOR gets fruity.

the BIG CHILL
HAVEN for super shakes

The job: Big Chill Staff Member

The good
- Colorful uniform. The hairnet is covered with a nice fisherman's hat or cap.
- Friendly staff
- Lotion or petroleum jelly is supplied for dry hands.

The bad
- Uncomfortable uniform—but only under pressure. The apron is not adjustable.
- Working in a rather cramped area
- The smell of all kinds of fruit peels piled up in the garbage, making for a slightly *palengke* smell
- Dealing with customers in a rush—those who order minutes before the movie is about to start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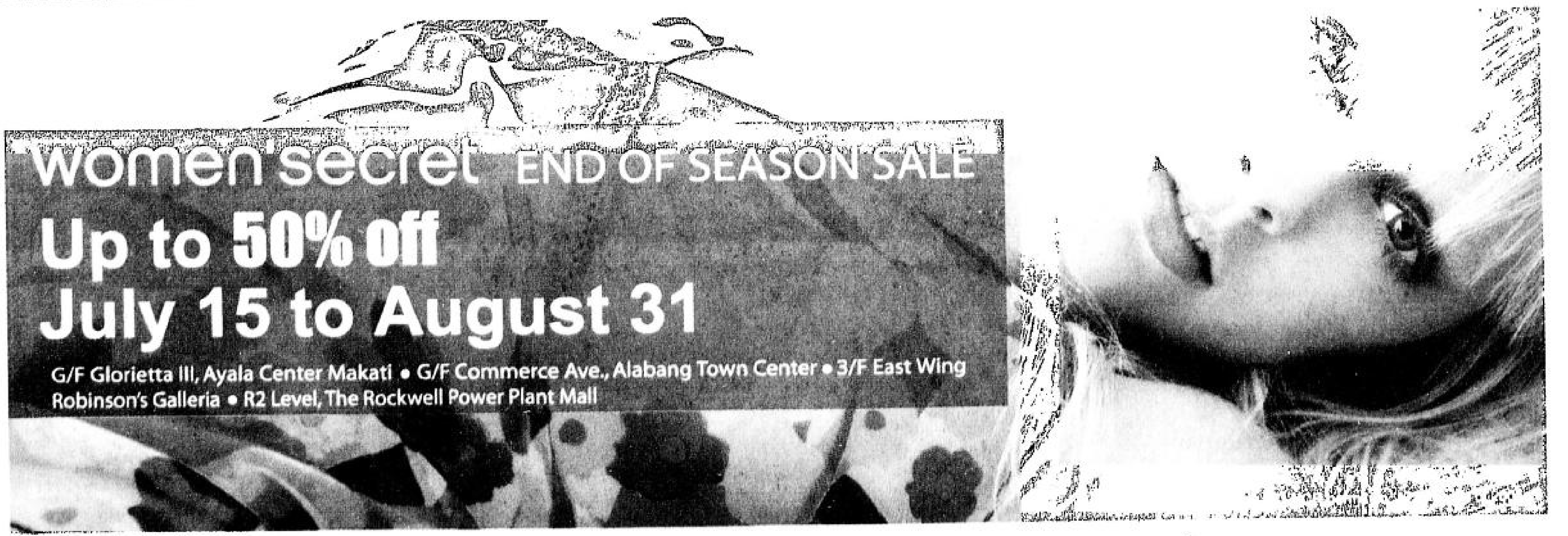
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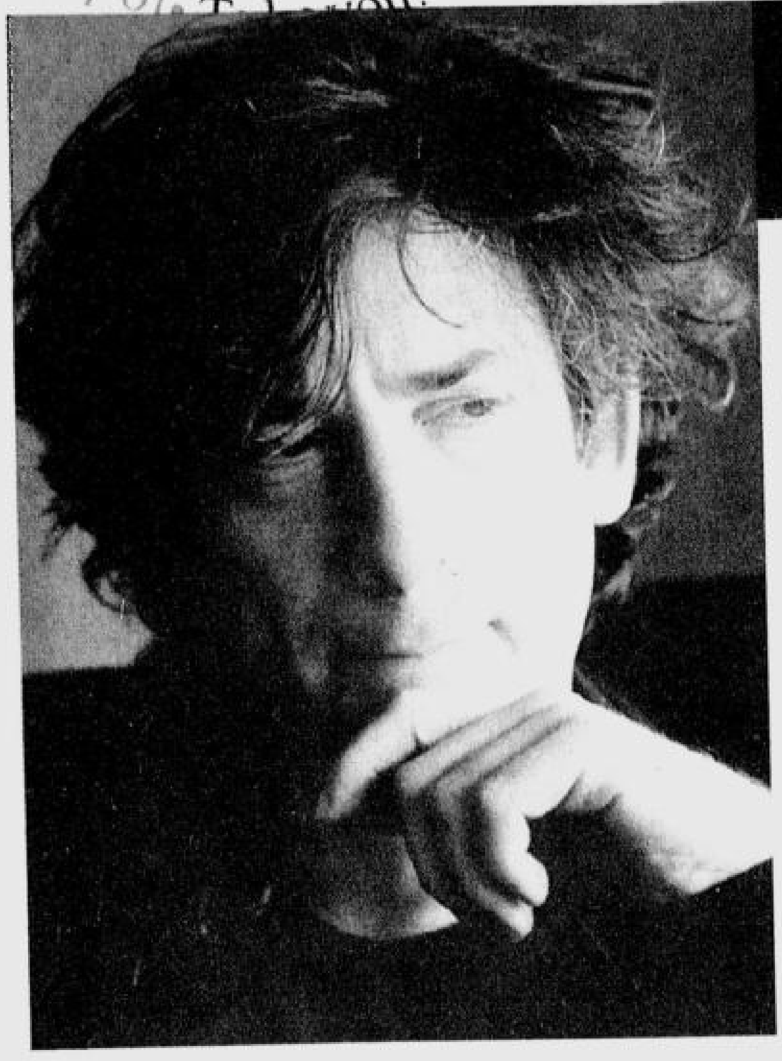
Daring to dream with Neil Gaiman

The world-famous writer of 'The Sandman' goes one-on-one with the INQUIRER about his upcoming projects, fame, the Philippines and what a strange trip it has been



EXCITED fans have their books signed.

First of two parts

By Ruel S. De Vera
Photos by Raffy Lerma

ALL OF a sudden, Neil Gaiman's fingers are stained with the stains of his imaginations, the long, slender, pale fingers splattered with blood-like liquid. He pauses, and then begins to wipe the blots with a napkin. "I'm getting ink everywhere," he says with a slight smile.

Everywhere is correct, as the fortysomething Gaiman, one of the world's most popular comic book creators known for the DC/Vertigo series "The Sandman" as well as the author of best-selling novels "Neverwhere" and "American Gods," is in the middle of a world tour. The closest thing the comic book world has to a rock star, he is now in Manila from Singapore and soon to be in Australia.

In the meantime, he's sitting here in the Manila Peninsula in his patented leather jacket and familiar shock of hair (cut just a little shorter than in his usual photos and slightly laced with gray), with a platoon of pens arrayed before him and ink stains on his hands. His visit is courtesy of Fully Booked and the British Council.

Is this your first time in Asia?

It's pretty much my first in Asia. Definitely my first time doing anything aside from changing planes. And it's been wonderful. I wish I had come out here much earlier.

So how do you find it here, considering you just got here?

I got in last night. The strangest thing is coming here from Singapore, which is my last stop, and the contrast between the two places, because Singapore is compact and gleaming and a country where chewing gum is illegal and there are fines for littering, jaywalking. Everyone's neat, everybody's driven. They love to get into lines and be told what to do. And then coming from there to here, and it's just a huge cyberpunk sprawl where the idea of making chewing illegal out here, people would simply laugh at you.

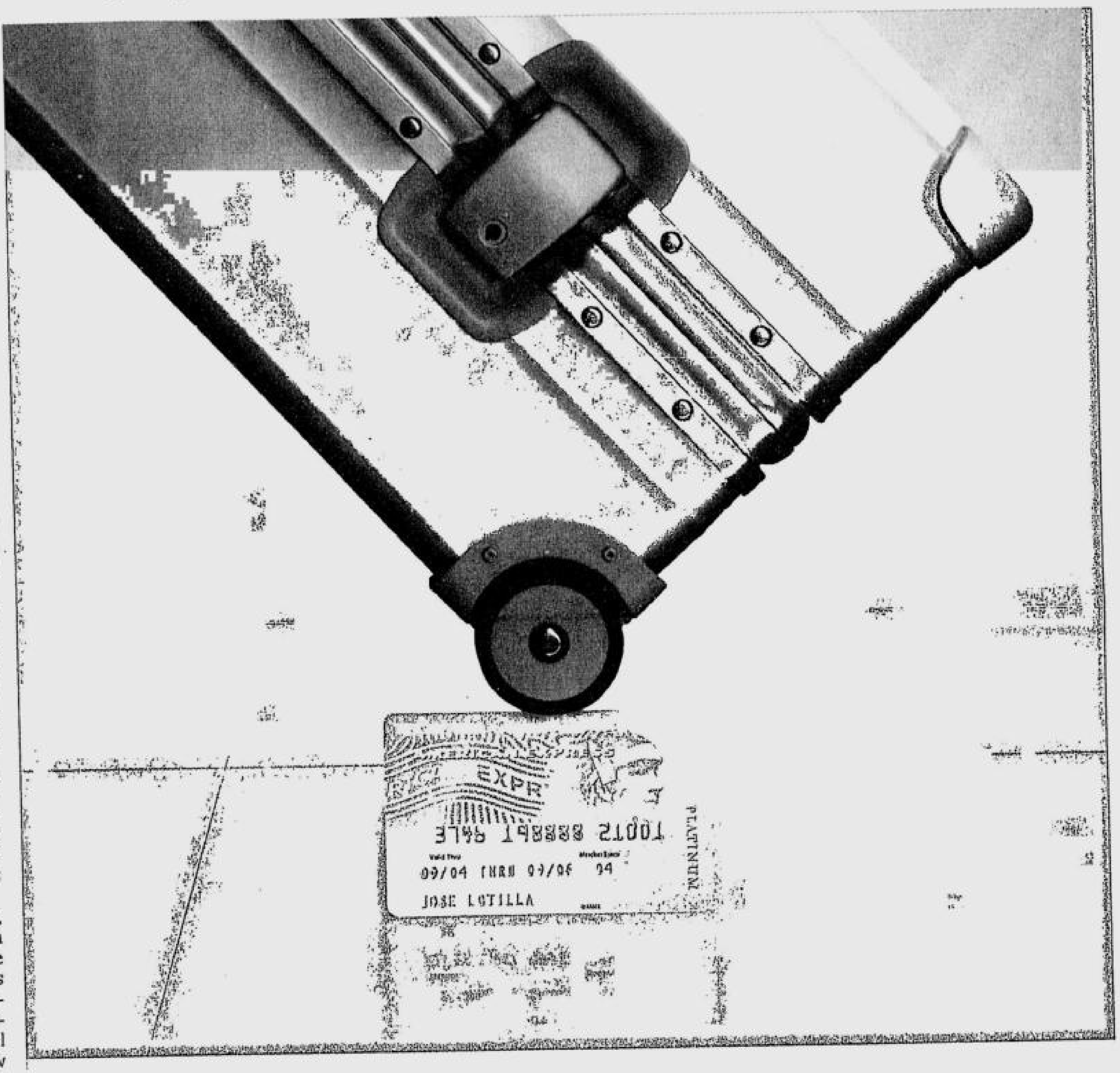
You're still best known for the Sandman series for DC/Vertigo. How do you feel about the legacy of the Sandman?

I'm fascinated by it. People have been asking recently how I feel working in the shadow of the Sandman and I said, there's an awful lot of work and it went very high and it stretches a long shadow. I think it's very weird now because I go from country to country and when I do come to, Asia, like now, example, and the question is how do you feel about how you're always going to be known as Neil "The Sandman" Gaiman? And I say basically it depends where you go.

I went to Poland, for example, and I discover that actually it can be very crazy because, as a Pole explained, the four big authors there are (attempts a Polish accent) "J.R.R. Tolkien, J.K. Rowling, Terry Pratchett, Neil Gaiman." Ah, OK, so they follow me around with a TV crew and the question they want to ask is, "You are very famous as post-modernist fantasy author, do you wish you were known for something else? And I say, 'Yes, I did this comic The Sandman.' And naturally, they've just started publishing Sandman over there in these black-and-white editions because Neil Gaiman the famous

DARING/D3

SOME fans stood in line for eight hours to see their favorite author.



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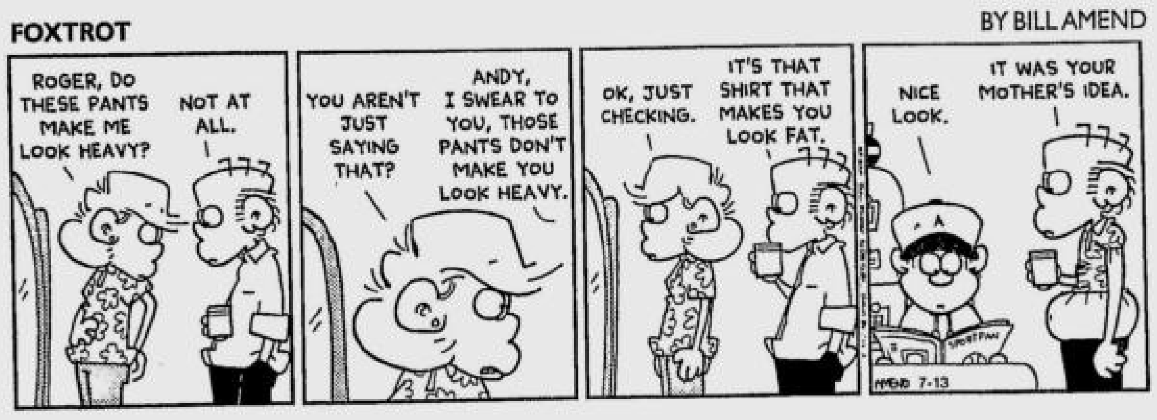
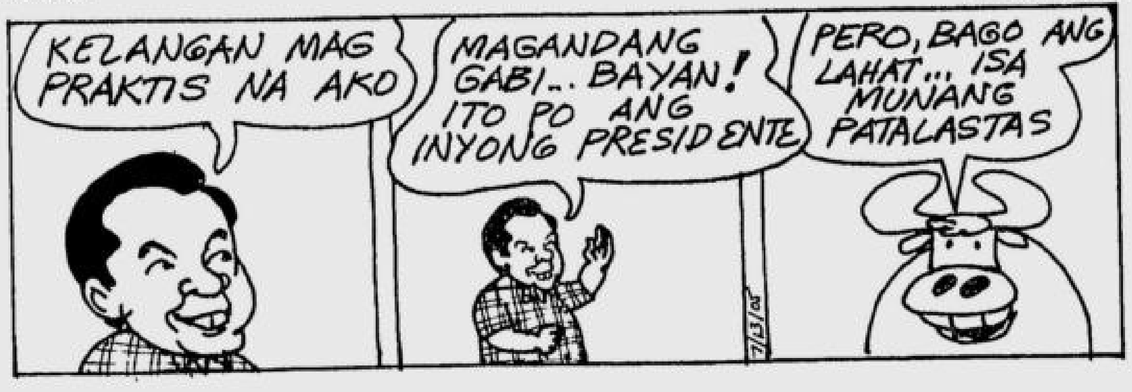
Fun Sarap Witch
Magnolia
Cheezee. SAUSAGE PROCESSED CHEESE SPREAD HOTDOG
HOTDOG-FLAVORED CHEESE with HOTDOG Bits
Cheezee. SAUSAGE
ANG CHEEZEE KASI

Mukhang sausage
pero hindi sausago.
Cheese na lasang hotdog
pero hindi cheesedog.
Ano 'to? Eh 'di Magnolia
Cheezee Sausage!
2-in-1 sarap ng
hotdog and cheese.

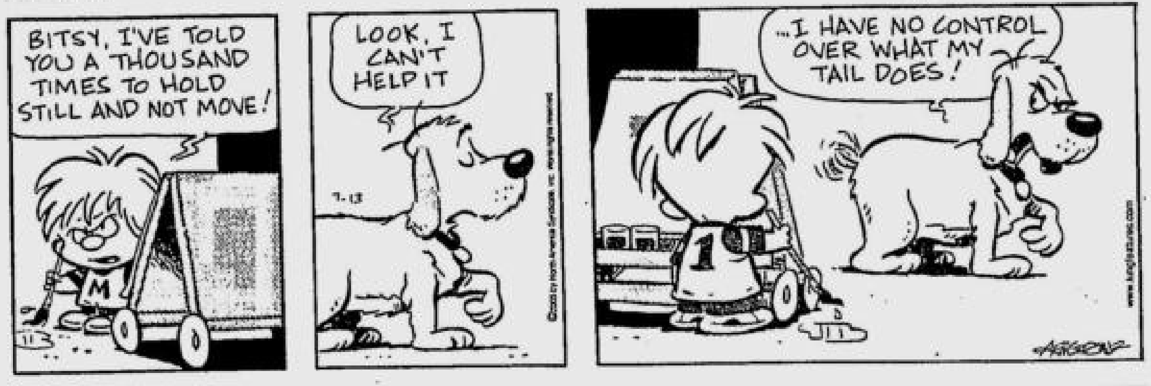
FOXTROT BY BILL AMEND


ROGER, DO THESE PANTS MAKE ME LOOK HEAVY?
NOT AT ALL.
YOU AREN'T JUST SAYING THAT?
ANDY, I SWEAR TO YOU, THOSE PANTS DON'T MAKE YOU LOOK HEAVY.
OK, JUST CHECKING.
IT'S THAT SHIRT THAT MAKES YOU LOOK FAT.
NICE LOOK.
IT WAS YOUR MOTHER'S IDEA.
AMEND 7-13

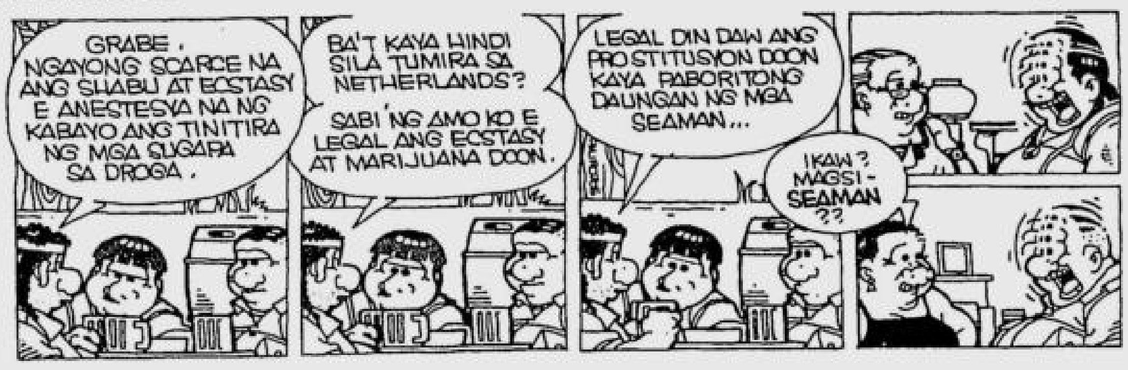
A. LIPIN BY JESS ABRERA


KELANGAN MAG PRAKTIS NA AKO
MAGANDANG GABI.. BAYAN! ITO PO ANG INYONG PRESIDENTE
PERO, BAGO ANG LAHAT... ISA MUNANG PATALASTAS
7/13/05

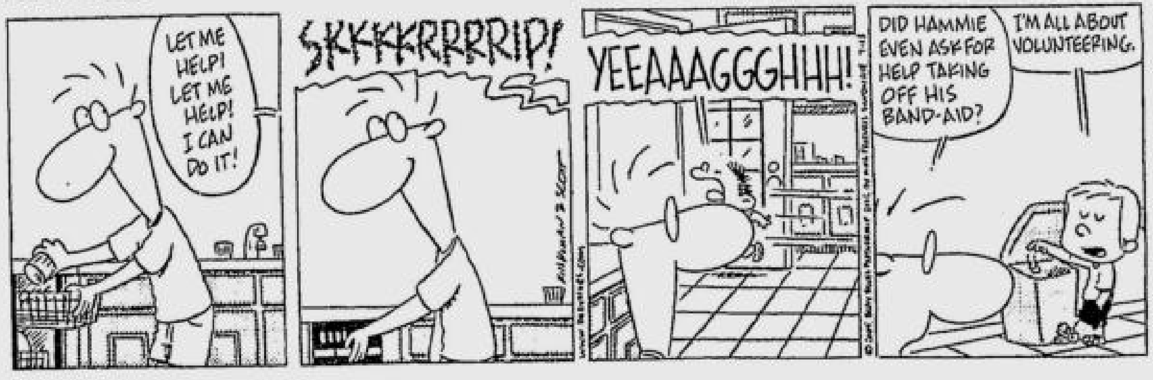
MARVIN BY TOM ARMSTRONG


BITSY, I'VE TOLD YOU A THOUSAND TIMES TO HOLD STILL AND NOT MOVE!
LOOK, I CAN'T HELP IT
...I HAVE NO CONTROL OVER WHAT MY TAIL DOES!
7-13

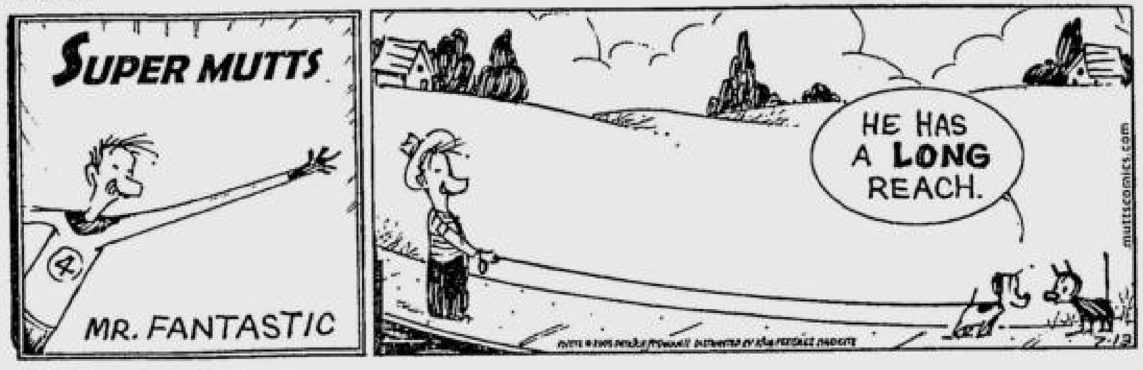
PUGAD BABOY BY P.M. JUNIOR


GRABE. NGAYONG SCARCE NA ANG SHABU AT ECSTASY E ANESTESYA NA NG KABAYO ANG TINITIRA NG MGA SUGAPA SA DROGA.
BA'T KAYA HINDI SILA TUMIRA SA NETHERLANDS?
SABI 'NG AMO KO E LEGAL ANG ECSTASY AT MARIJUANA DOON.
LEGAL DIN DAW ANG PROSTITUSYON DOON KAYA PABORITONG DAUNGAN NG MGA SEAMAN...
IKAW? MAGSI-SEAMAN??

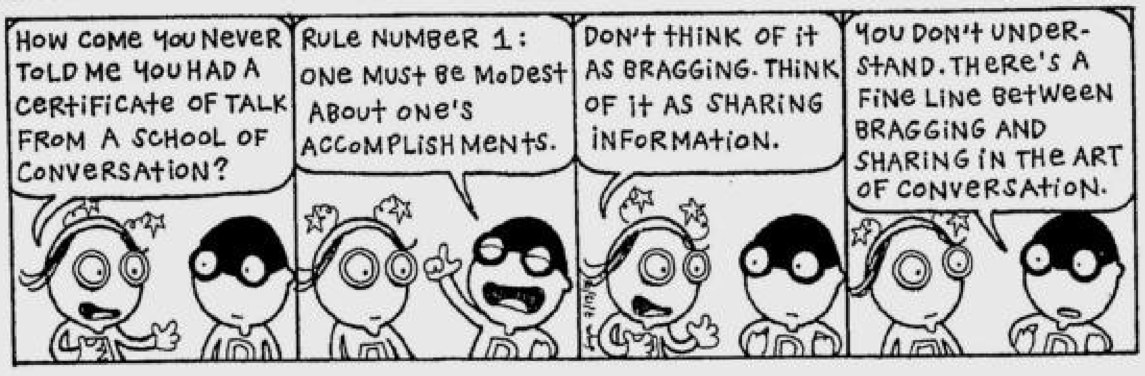
BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT


LET ME HELP! LET ME HELP! I CAN DO IT!
SKKKKRRRRIP!
YEEAAAGGGHHH!
DID HAMMIE EVEN ASK FOR HELP TAKING OFF HIS BAND-AID?
I'M ALL ABOUT VOLUNTEERING.

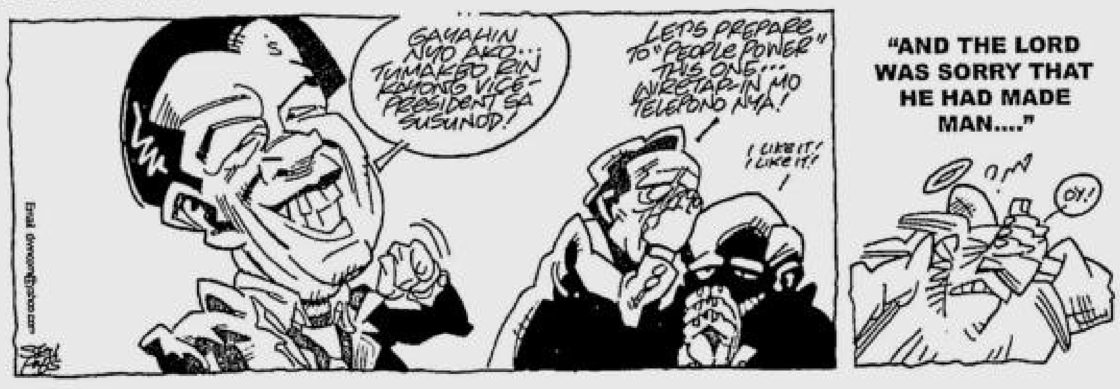
MUTTS BY PATRICK McDONNELL


SUPER MUTTS
MR. FANTASTIC
HE HAS A LONG REACH.
muttscomics.com
7-13

ATOMO AND WEBOY BY LYRA GARCELLANO


How come you never told me you had a certificate of talk from a school of conversation?
Rule number 1: one must be modest about one's accomplishments.
Don't think of it as bragging. Think of it as sharing information.
You don't understand. There's a fine line between bragging and sharing in the art of conversation.

DIVINE COMEDY BY STEVEN PABALINAS


GAYAHIN NYO AKO... TUMAKBO RIN KAYONG VICE-PRESIDENT SA SUSUNOD!
LET'S PREPARE TO "PEOPLE POWER" THIS ONE... WIRETAP-IN MO TELEPONO NYA!
I LIKE IT! I LIKE IT!
"AND THE LORD WAS SORRY THAT HE HAD MADE MAN...."
OY!

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're willing to take a risk in life because you like adventure. You know what you want, and you're willing to work for it. Because of this determination, you generally succeed in getting what you want. In the year ahead, you'll let go of many things in order to move in a whole new direction.
Birthdate of: Cheech Marin, actor; Harrison Ford, actor; Patrick Stewart, actor.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You might feel totally confused about a romantic situation today. (The road of true love never runs smooth.) Make sure you have your facts straight.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Conversations with parents and family members are very confusing today. This might be because somebody is trying to throw you a curveball. Be on the lookout for this.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You're caught up in daydreams and fantasies. It's hard to concentrate on your work. However, if something to be done that needs imagination, you'd be perfect for the job!

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Be extra-careful in all your financial transactions today. Keep track of your money. Count your change. It's easy to lose money or be deceived in some way.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): This is a poor day for important discussions or for important negotiations and contracts. Communication is too confusing! Plus there's a tendency for people to be dishonest.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Something secretive (perhaps behind your back) could be going on today. This doesn't have to be the case; however, if you feel something's fishy, it is!

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): For some reason, you can't understand a friend today. It's as if your conversation is like two ships passing in the night. Just be patient. Misunderstandings occur everywhere today.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): This is a very poor day to have important discussions with authority figures, parents, teachers and supervisors. You will not achieve what you want. In fact, confusion might make things worse!

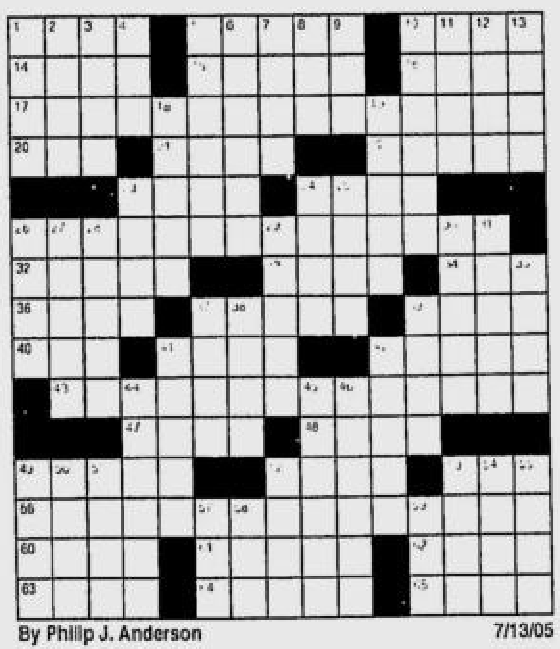
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You might not have the right facts concerning certain political or religious ideas. Someone could be playing fast and loose with the truth. Listen to your own doubts.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Think twice before spending money today, or before you lend someone anything. You might not have all the facts. Or someone might be stringing you along. (Not good!)

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Communication is difficult today. Misunderstandings with others run rampant! This is the classic time for being swindled or lied to.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Double-check your work today. Your mind is in a bit of a fog. You might not have the correct data to begin with! (Others are very sloppy today, and this could affect your work.)

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Philip J. Anderson
Portland, OR
7/13/05

ACROSS
1 Marsh bird
5 Semiconductor
10 Woeful cry
14 Not working
15 Karenina and Christie
16 Latvian port
17 Really lazy bird?
20 Group of docs
21 Thailand neighbor
22 Push in the right direction
23 Pre-Easter season
24 Palm fruit
26 Really fast rodent?
32 Bruce Dern's daughter
33 Take apart
34 Precious stone
36 "Lonely Boy" singer
37 Semblance
39 Big name in little blocks
40 Graphic lead-in?
41 Work for
42 Like a twangy voice
43 Really angry reptile?
47 Supervisor
48 Round dance
49 Stay away from
52 Shoulder of the road
53 Director Lee
56 Really expensive dog?
60 Nobelist Wiesel
61 Lessen
62 Weighty book
63 Bears' lairs
64 Mythological king of Crete
65 Skiing surface

DOWN
1 Philbin co-host
2 Comic Sandler
3 Rick's flame in "Casablanca"
4 Aspin or Brown
5 Vietnam port
6 Gold bars, e.g.
7 Individuals
8 Patriotic grp.
9 Psychic letters
10 Debater
11 Told a whopper
12 Highly excited
13 Having all one's marbles
18 "Maria __"
19 Lead-in
23 Old money in Milan
24 Importunes for payment
25 Assistant
26 Ensign
27 Highway parts
28 Canadian territory
29 Actor Alda
30 Discharge
31 Within the rules
35 Sleeper spy
37 Passes
38 "Exodus" writer
39 "Doctor Zhivago" role
41 Old-style poetry
42 Paavo the Flying Finn
44 Tolerates
45 Segregated housing
46 Strait off New Guinea
49 Grew older
50 Mouselike rodent
51 Ken or Lena
52 Noodle
53 Mary Kay rival
54 Nautilus captain
55 Increased
57 SE Asian war
58 Baseball stat
59 UFO passengers

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved

A	B	U	Z	Z	■	P	U	N	S	■	S	C	A	M
N	I	M	O	Y	■	E	S	A	I	■	L	O	R	E
S	T	A	N	D	O	N	E	S	G	R	O	U	N	D
■	■	■	K	E	N	■	■	C	H	E	E	P	E	D
U	R	N	■	C	O	M	P	A	S	S	■	D	S	L
P	H	O	T	O	■	O	U	R	■	O	B	E	S	E
N	O	S	Y	■	S	U	M	■	C	L	O	G	■	■
■	S	T	R	I	K	E	P	A	Y	D	I	R	T	■
■	■	R	O	M	A	■	K	I	D	■	L	A	O	S
S	C	A	L	A	■	D	I	N	■	A	S	C	O	T
L	A	D	■	G	L	I	N	T	E	D	■	F	L	Y
A	N	A	H	E	I	M	■	■	T	V	S	■	■	■
C	O	M	E	D	O	W	N	T	O	E	A	R	T	H
K	L	U	M	■	N	I	N	O	■	R	I	N	S	E
S	A	S	S	■	S	T	E	W	■	B	L	A	K	E

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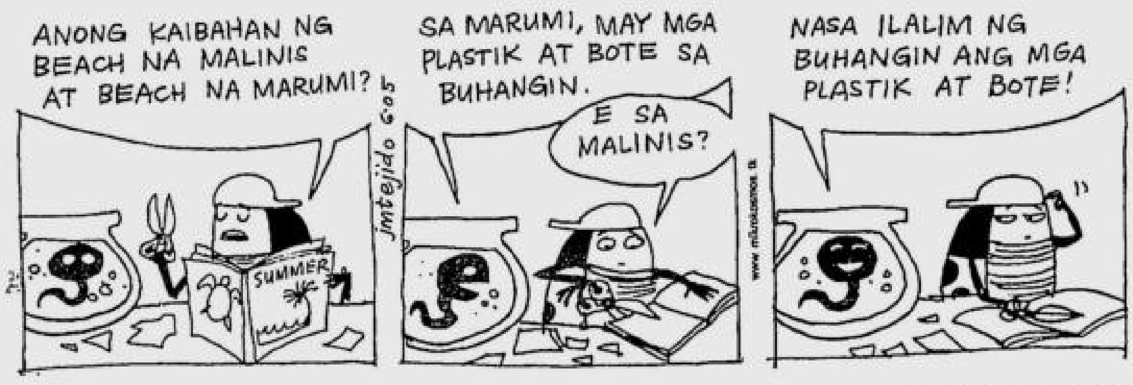
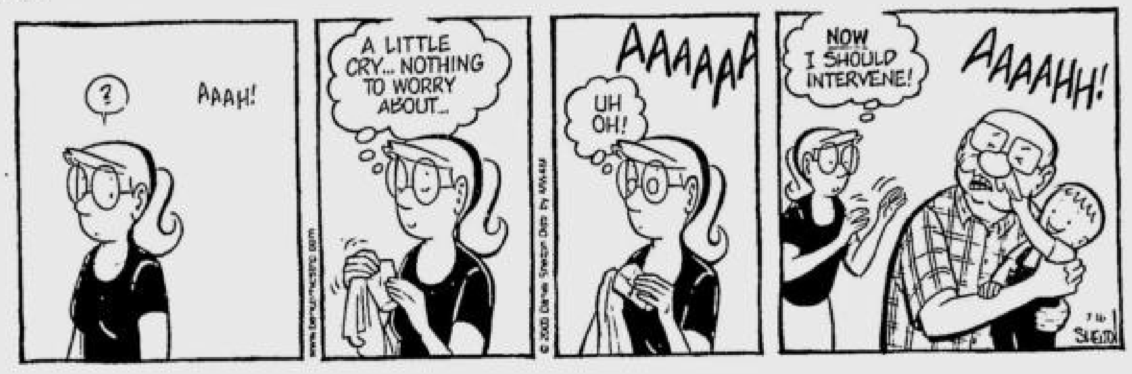
7/13/05

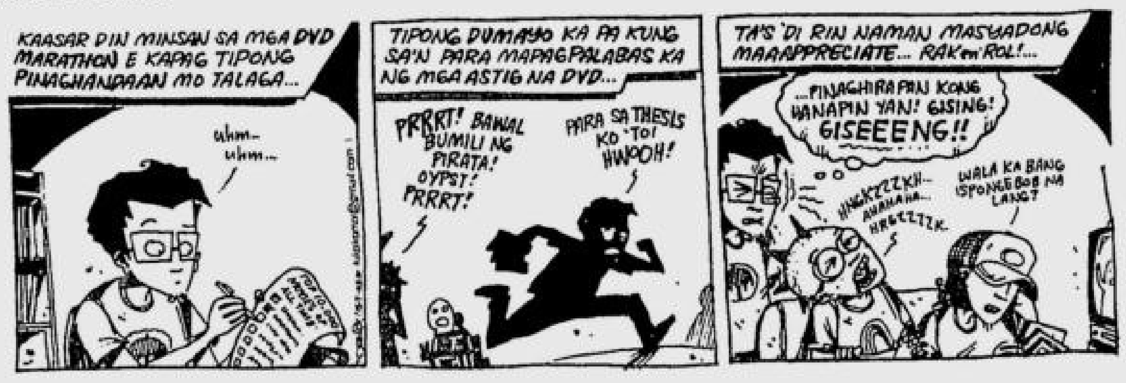
MIKROKOSMOS BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


ANONG KAIBAHAN NG BEACH NA MALINIS AT BEACH NA MARUMI?
SA MARUMI, MAY MGA PLASTIK AT BOTE SA BUHANGIN.
E SA MALINIS?
NASA ILALIM NG BUHANGIN ANG MGA PLASTIK AT BOTE!
SUMMER
jmtejido 6-05

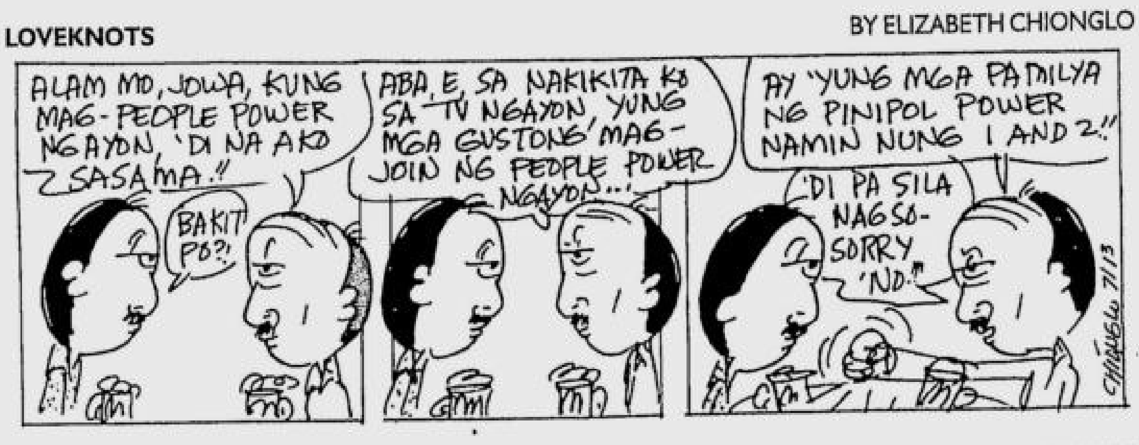
BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON


?
AAAH!
A LITTLE CRY... NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT...
AAAAAA
UH OH!
NOW I SHOULD INTERVENE!
AAAAHH!

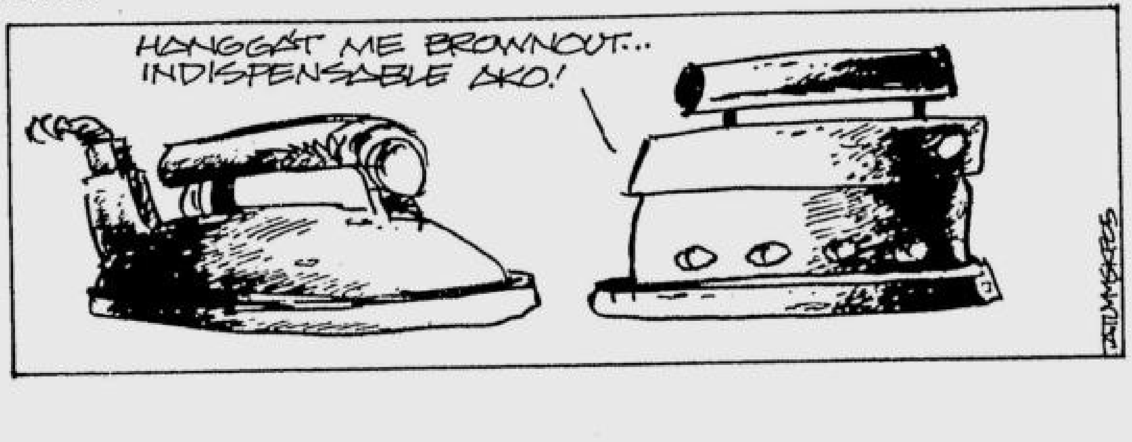
KIKO MACHINE BY MANIX ABRERA


KAASAR DIN MINSAN SA MGA DVD MARATHON E KAPAG TIPONG PINAGHANDAAN MO TALAGA...
uhm- uhm...
TIPONG DUMAYO KA PA KUNG SA'N PARA MAPAGPALABAS KA NG MGA ASTIG NA DVD...
PRRRT! BAWAL BUMILI NG PIRATA! OYPST! PRRRT!
PARA SA THESIS KO 'TO! HWOOH!
TA'S 'DI RIN NAMAN MASYADONG MAAAPPRECIATE... RAK en ROL!...
...PINAGHIRAPAN KONG HANAPIN YAN! GISING! GISEEENG!!
HNGKZZZKH... AHAHAHA... HRGZZZZK...
WALA KA BANG ISPONGEBOB NA LANG?

LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


ALAM MO, JOWA, KUNG MAG-PEOPLE POWER NGAYON, 'DI NA AKO SASAMA.!!
BAKIT PO?!
ABA, E, SA NAKIKITA KO SA TV NGAYON, YUNG MGA GUSTONG MAG-JOIN NG PEOPLE POWER NGAYON...
AY 'YUNG MGA PAMILYA NG PINIPOL POWER NAMIN NUNG 1 AND 2.!!
'DI PA SILA NAGSO-SORRY 'NO.
CHIONGLO 7/13

TULDOK BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


HANGGAT ME BROWNOUT... INDISPENSABLE AKO!

Daring to dream . . .

From page D1

author did them. So it really is so much a matter where you are.

In the US and the UK, it's about 50-50. In fact, what I'm frustrated about now is, on the one hand, I'm a best-selling author, but on the other hand, what I'm hearing from people is, "I love your books, I love your novels, I haven't really read any of your graphic novels because I don't read comics. But I love your books." But here is this enormous body of work that I did that has some amazing stuff in it and you'd really like it if you read it.

You recently returned to writing about Dream in "The Sandman: Endless Nights" hardcover. Do you plan to work with the Endless again anytime soon?

I'm playing with the idea. I was talking to my editor at DC Comics, Karen Berger, and we were playing with some ideas, going over some things in conversation, and we kind of noticed that The Sandman's 20th anniversary is not that far away. I thought it would be fun to come back and do something, "The Sandman Zero Project," or something we've being talking about doing for years, so it may well happen.

After you ended the Sandman, you did all these different things. Was it a conscious decision for you to step away from the Sandman mythos and work on something else?

The problem with Sandman was that, when I started writing Sandman, it took me two weeks out of every month, and that was fine. By the time I finished it, it was taking me six weeks out of every month, which meant

DARING/ D4

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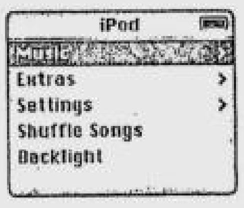

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Daring to dream . . .

From page D3

that anything else I wanted to do simply isn't going to get done.

In the early days of writing Sandman, I could be "Sandman," and I could be "Books of Magic," (another DC/Vertigo series) or I could be "Sandman" and I could be "Good Omens" (the novel he co-authored with Terry Pratchett). By the end of that, people would call me up and say, "Would you like to do a TV series?" And I'd say no. "How about a novel?" No. "Could you do a short story." No. And that's how it was, there wasn't anything else I could fit in.

So once it was done, there were an awful lot of others I wanted to do that I just hadn't gotten done yet. I got to do a bunch of weird things. I got to write an episode of "Babylon 5," since Joe Straczynski had been asking me write an episode since 1991.

I don't think there was ever a conscious step away. I think there was definitely a desire to build things I could own. The problem with Sandman in respect to me is, I don't own it. People ask me, "We love Sandman, can we put on a play," and I say, "go ask DC. I dunno." I'm sure if ever a really bad Sandman movie were made, people would come to me and ask why I let that happen. "Oh, I don't own it." Sandman for me is the equivalent of someone else coming to me and saying, "I have a big wall here, would you like to paint a mural?" And you do, but you don't own the wall. They can do anything, they can even knock down the wall. The nice thing about something like "American Gods," is I own the wall.

You have kept very busy, writing the mini-series "Marvel 1602" for Marvel Comics and now, you're just about to release the novel "Anansi Boys" in September. What's next?

Dear God, isn't that enough? What's coming out next? Well, "Mirror Mask" comes in September in America, which is the film that Dave McKean and I made for $4 million. Because George Bush is not what anybody on this planet would ever describe as a raving economic genius, when we said yes to making the film, that was £2½ million for Dave McKean to play with. By the time we were actually paying the animators, it was £2 million. So we had actually lost half a million pounds—$1 million had gone away from our budget just by the exchange rate.

In September, they start shooting Beowulf, which is a film that I wrote with Roger Avery that Robert Zemeckis is going to be shooting. The next children's novel I'm working on is called "The Graveyard Book."

You've been doing a lot of children's books? Why is that?

Let's back up here for a minute. The thing I don't understand is that people ask me, "why are you doing all these different media, why? You're doing children's books, why?" I don't understand why all authors don't. It would be like somebody who likes food being asked, "I don't get it. You had a Mexican meal last night, but today, you're eating Japanese food! What's the fascination with Japanese food?" And you're like, "I had a Mexican meal last night, and tomorrow, I'm probably going to have pasta." Doesn't everybody change around a bit? I have children and I was a child, which meant that from the age of maybe 2 to maybe 12, I loved children's books more than anything and once I had children, I got to discover the delights of reading children's books with my kids. I also discovered that if you write children's books, your children will think you're cool.

The thing that was funniest was with "Coraline." I began writing "Coraline" in about 1990. I wrote a few chapters and showed it to my editor in London, who said, "You're writing a kid's book that's a horror novel that seems equally aimed at adults, so by definition it's unpublishable." So I sort of put it to one side. One day, I looked around and realized I wanted to finish it before my daughter Holly was an adult. She was about 14 at that point and my littlest daughter was about 3 or 4 and I thought, I've got to get back to this. So I sent the first half of the book, which I did before I moved to America, to my editor at Harpers and said, "Read this and tell me what you think." And she phoned up and said, "It's great! What happens next?" And I said, "Well, send me a contract and we'll both find out." And that's how "Coraline" came about.

GAIMAN reads from his laptop after a trip to what he calls "Printer Hell."

SO MANY people turned up to see Gaiman that he finished signing books at the Rockwell Tent past 1 a.m.

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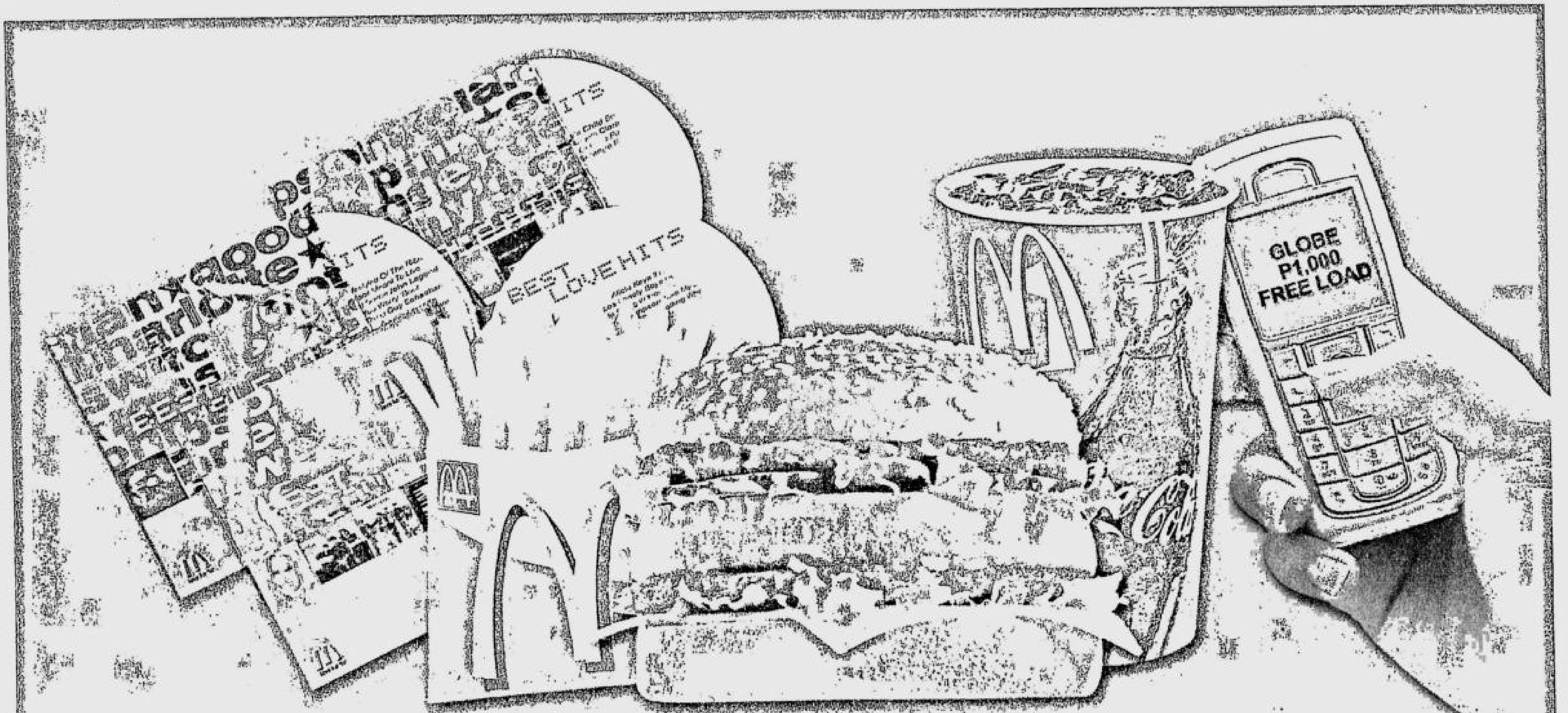

The McDonald's Rockin' Combo Meal

It's filling enough for you, your PC and your phone.

Just add P50 to any Value Meal to get a Rockin' Combo Meal which includes a Big Mac Dream CD and a chance to win P1,000 free load from Gentxt.

The Rockin' Combo Meal includes a special enhanced CD packed with music, wallpapers, screensavers and PC games. Choose from Best Male Hits, Best Female Hits or Best Love Hits.

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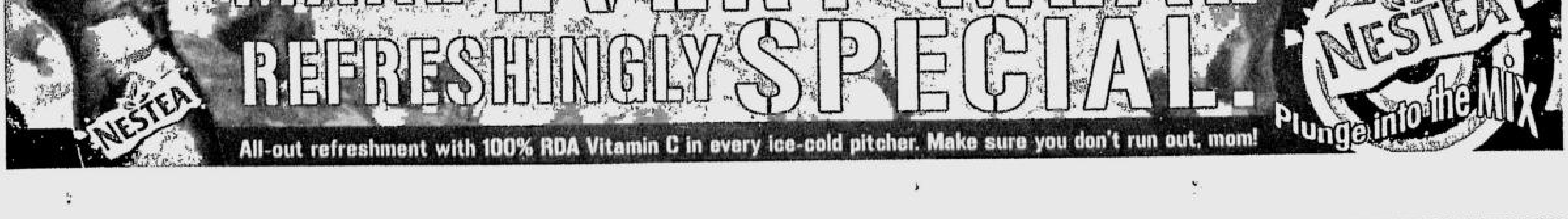

All-out refreshment with 100% RDA Vitamin C in every ice-cold pitcher. Make sure you don't run out, mom!